

# Public Document Pack



To: Councillor Laing, Convener; Councillor Lumsden, Vice Convener; and Councillors Boulton, Jackie Dunbar, Grant, Houghton, McRae, Alex Nicoll and Yuill.

Town House,  
ABERDEEN, 8 January 2021

## **URGENT BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

The Members of the **URGENT BUSINESS COMMITTEE** are requested to meet remotely on **TUESDAY, 12 JANUARY 2021 at 3.00pm.**

FRASER BELL  
CHIEF OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

In accordance with UK and Scottish Government guidance, meetings of this Committee will be held remotely as required. In these circumstances the meetings will be recorded and available on the Committee page on the website.

### **BUSINESS**

#### **DETERMINATION OF URGENT BUSINESS**

- 1 Determination of Urgent Business

#### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 2 Members are requested to intimate any declarations of interest (Pages 3 - 4)

#### **MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 3 Minute of Meeting of Urgent Business Committee of 23 December 2020 - for approval (Pages 5 - 6)

#### **BUSINESS**

- 4 Aberdeen City Centre Business Improvement District (BID) Renewal Proposals 2021-2026 - COM/21/022 (Pages 7 - 44)

EHRIAs related to reports on this agenda can be viewed [here](#)

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Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact Martyn Orchard 01224 523097 or email [morchard@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:morchard@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

You must consider at the earliest stage possible whether you have an interest to declare in relation to any matter which is to be considered. You should consider whether reports for meetings raise any issue of declaration of interest. Your declaration of interest must be made under the standing item on the agenda, however if you do identify the need for a declaration of interest only when a particular matter is being discussed then you must declare the interest as soon as you realise it is necessary. The following wording may be helpful for you in making your declaration.

I declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons .....

*For example, I know the applicant / I am a member of the Board of X / I am employed by...* and I will therefore withdraw from the meeting room during any discussion and voting on that item.

### **OR**

I have considered whether I require to declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons ..... however, having applied the objective test, I consider that my interest is so remote / insignificant that it does not require me to remove myself from consideration of the item.

### **OR**

I declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons ..... however I consider that a specific exclusion applies as my interest is as a member of xxxx, which is

- (a) a devolved public body as defined in Schedule 3 to the Act;
- (b) a public body established by enactment or in pursuance of statutory powers or by the authority of statute or a statutory scheme;
- (c) a body with whom there is in force an agreement which has been made in pursuance of Section 19 of the Enterprise and New Towns (Scotland) Act 1990 by Scottish Enterprise or Highlands and Islands Enterprise for the discharge by that body of any of the functions of Scottish Enterprise or, as the case may be, Highlands and Islands Enterprise; or
- (d) a body being a company:-
  - i. established wholly or mainly for the purpose of providing services to the Councillor's local authority; and
  - ii. which has entered into a contractual arrangement with that local authority for the supply of goods and/or services to that local authority.

### **OR**

I declare an interest in item (x) for the following reasons.....and although the body is covered by a specific exclusion, the matter before the Committee is one that is quasi-judicial / regulatory in nature where the body I am a member of:

- is applying for a licence, a consent or an approval
- is making an objection or representation
- has a material interest concerning a licence consent or approval
- is the subject of a statutory order of a regulatory nature made or proposed to be made by the local authority.... and I will therefore withdraw from the meeting room during any discussion and voting on that item.

## URGENT BUSINESS COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 23 December 2020. Minute of Meeting of the URGENT BUSINESS COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Laing, Convener; Councillor Lumsden; Vice Convener; and Councillors Boulton, Jackie Dunbar, Grant, Houghton, McRae, Alex Nicoll and Yuill.

The agenda associated with this minute can be found [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

### DETERMINATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

1. In terms of Section 1.3 of the Committee Remit and in accordance with Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Committee was informed that it had to determine (1) that the item on the agenda was of an urgent nature; and (2) that the Committee required to consider the item and take decisions thereon.

#### **The Committee resolved:-**

to agree that the item of business was of an urgent nature and required to be considered this day to enable the Committee to consider the matter at the earliest available opportunity and take decisions thereon.

### COVID-19 - MOVE TO LEVEL 4 - COM/20/246

2. The Committee had before it a joint report by the Chief Officer - Data & Insights and the Chief Officer - Governance which sought approval of proposed actions ahead of Aberdeen moving into Level 4 of the Scottish Government's Strategic Framework for suppressing Covid-19.

#### **The report recommended:-**

that the Committee -

- (a) approve the proposed actions set out in Appendix 1;
- (b) instruct the Chief Education Officer to make a request to the Scottish Government for an additional closure day for all Aberdeen City Council schools on 5 January 2021;
- (c) agree that, during the period of 23 December 2020 to 5 January 2021 inclusive, the Covid-19 Duty Emergency Response Coordinators (DERCs) should take any action necessary in terms of General Delegation 37 to Chief Officers set out in the Powers Delegated to Officers, to ensure compliance with the law and guidance with such decisions, where possible, being taken following consultation with the co-leaders, relevant convener and relevant vice-convener; and
- (d) note that any said action taken by a Covid-19 DERC in terms of recommendation (c) would be reported to the meeting of the City Growth and Resources Committee on 3 February 2021.

**URGENT BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

23 December 2020

The Convener moved, seconded by the Vice Convener:-

That the Committee approve the recommendations contained within the report.

Councillor Alex Nicoll moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Yuill:-

That the Committee:-

- (1) approve recommendations (a) and (b); and
- (2) agree that, during the period of 23 December 2020 to 5 January 2021 inclusive, the Covid-19 Duty Emergency Response Coordinators (DERCs) should take any action necessary in terms of General Delegation 37 to Chief Officers set out in the Powers Delegated to Officers, to ensure compliance with the law and guidance with such decisions, where possible, following the calling of a meeting of the Urgent Business Committee.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (5) - Convener; Vice Convener; and Councillors Boulton, Grant and Houghton; for the amendment (4) - Councillors Jackie Dunbar, McRae, Alex Nicoll and Yuill.

**The Committee resolved:-**

to adopt the motion.

- **JENNIFER LAING, Convener**

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Urgent Business Committee
<b>DATE</b>	12 January 2021
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Aberdeen City Centre Business Improvement District (BID) Renewal Proposals 2021-2026
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	COM/21/022
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Richard Sweetnam
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Richard Sweetnam
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the Council's option to veto the Business Improvement District (BID) renewal proposals; and, if the ballot is to proceed, the date on which it will be held.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 resolves ***not*** to veto the BID renewal proposals drawn up by Aberdeen Inspired in respect of the Aberdeen City Centre Business Improvement District for 2021-2026 and instructs the Chief Officer – City Growth to arrange for the issuing of the requisite notices under section 42 of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006; and
- 2.2 in the event of recommendation 2.1 being approved, instructs the Chief Officer - Governance as Returning Officer to arrange for the holding of a BID renewal ballot on 25 March 2021 in relation to the BID renewal proposals and to take any other actions which may be necessary in connection with this process.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 BID procedures are governed by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Business Improvement Districts (Scotland) Regulations 2007.
- 3.2 The current Aberdeen City Centre BID arrangements, as renewed in 2016 for a period of five years, are due to end on 31 March 2021. The arrangements are to enable specified projects to be carried out for the benefit of Aberdeen City Centre and those who live, work or carry out any activity there.

- 3.3 Aberdeen BID Company Ltd (known as Aberdeen Inspired) has once again submitted BID renewal proposals to the Council and requested that the Council instruct the holding of a renewal ballot in relation to those renewal proposals, for a further five year period to 31 March 2026. The Council is now required to give notice to Aberdeen Inspired and the Scottish Ministers on or before 13 January 2021 as to whether or not the Council is vetoing the renewal proposals. Such notice must set out the reasons for the exercise (or non-exercise) of the veto and a ballot cannot be held if the proposals are vetoed.
- 3.4 Appendix 1 to this report comprises the BID renewal proposals (for the period 1 April 2021– 31 March 2026) which Aberdeen Inspired wishes to be put to a ballot on 25 March 2021. This indicates the formal proposal to proceed to a ballot. However a supporting business plan that will set out the detailed proposals is being finalised that will be used to inform levy payers of the planned activities for the new period.
- 3.5 The Council may veto proposals only if it considers that the proposals are likely to:
- a) conflict with any structure plan, local plan, strategic development plan or local development plan which has been approved or adopted under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and which applies to the proposed BID or any part of it,
  - b) conflict to a material extent with any policy formally adopted by and contained in a document published by the Council (whether or not the Council are under a statutory duty to prepare such a document), or
  - c) lead to a significantly disproportionate financial burden being imposed on—
    - (i) any person entitled to vote in the ballot on the proposals, or
    - (ii) any class of such persons,as compared to other such persons or classes.
- 3.6 In deciding whether to veto proposals, the Council must have regard to the following matters:
- a) the level of support (as evidenced by the result of the BID ballot) for the BID proposals, where this information is available;
  - b) the nature and extent of the conflicts mentioned above;
  - c) the structure of the proposed BID levy and how the financial burden of the BID is to be distributed amongst ratepayers and the other eligible persons in the geographical area of the BID;
  - d) how the financial burden of the BID may have been disproportionately distributed among ratepayers and the other eligible persons as a result of the selection of the geographic area or areas of the BID;
  - e) the extent to which the BID proposer discussed the BID proposals with the Council before submitting the BID proposals to the Council; and
  - f) the cost incurred by any person in developing the BID proposals and canvassing in relation to the BID proposals.



## **4. ISSUES**

- 4.1 The outcome of such a ballot would determine whether or not the BID continues beyond 31 March 2021. This would be an individual decision for each eligible voter based on their review of the proposals supplied by Aberdeen Inspired. The proposals for the next five year period are not dissimilar to those of the current period.
- 4.2 The proposal in Appendix 1 has been submitted to Scottish Towns Partnership and the Scottish Government against the relevant legislative requirements and against the BIDs good practice guidance. At the time of this report there have been no comments made on the proposals.
- 4.3 Given the content of the proposals, it is not considered that they are likely to lead to a conflict or significantly disproportionate financial burden as described at section 3.5 above. The geographic area covered by the BID is proposed to remain the same as in previous terms. Further, Aberdeen Inspired has been canvassing levy payers and around 80% of those consulted to date are reported to be in favour of proposals.
- 4.4 It is therefore considered that the Council should not veto the proposals and should give notice to Aberdeen Inspired and the Scottish Ministers that it is not vetoing the proposals, and that the holding of the ballot should be formally instructed.
- 4.5 If the ballot is to proceed, the Chief Officer – City Growth will report to the Council in March 2021 seeking its decision on how it will vote in the ballot – i.e. on whether it will vote ‘for’ or ‘against’ the BID renewal proposals.
- 4.6 Officers have discussed the implications of Covid-19 and the current lockdown on a ballot occurring on 25 March 2021 with officials from Scottish Government and Scottish Towns Partnership. Under existing legislation there can be no delay in a ballot solely based on the impact of Covid-19, although Scottish Government officials are discussing this with the Scottish Towns Partnership. Officers understand that there may be guidance issued by Scottish Government in the near future that might provide clarity on any circumstances and conditions that could enable a delay of a ballot in response to the immediate challenges and risks arising from the lockdown on a re-ballot. If there are any changes, elected members will be updated at the March meeting of the Council.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council arising from the recommendations of this report. Aberdeen Inspired has confirmed that it will meet the costs of the BID renewal campaign and ballot and has sufficient funds to do so.
- 5.2 Aberdeen Inspired approached officers to establish whether there could be support from the Council’s Election Team for the ballot. Officers have responded that preparations currently underway for the Scottish Parliament

elections in May 2021 could be affected and therefore it would not be able to support the management and delivery of the ballot.

5.3 The Returning Officer would therefore outsource the ballot arrangements in order that the ballot does not impact on the Council’s staff resource and this cost would be funded from within the Aberdeen Inspired budget.

5.4 This process is a natural conclusion to the expiring five year term of the BID, and is anticipated by all relevant partners and levy payers. As Aberdeen Inspired is funding the administration of this ballot, there are no direct financial consequences in relation to the running of the ballot to any other parties, including the Council.

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 In terms of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Business Improvement Districts (Scotland) Regulations 2007, the Council is required to give notice that it is or is not vetoing the proposals. It must exercise this power of veto in compliance with the statutory requirements, as summarised in section 3 above. If the Council vetoes the proposals, any person who would have been entitled to vote in the ballot may appeal to the Scottish Ministers.

## 7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	The report has an adverse effect on Council’s priorities	L	The development of the city centre and support to its businesses are embedded across economic strategies and plans, and the CCMP
<b>Compliance</b>	Non-compliance with legislation concerning power of veto.	L	Exercise power in compliance with the statutory requirements, as summarised in this report.
<b>Operational</b>	Officers cannot support the ballot process	L	Outsourcing administration of the ballot
<b>Financial</b>	The resources are not in place to deliver the ballot	L	Officers confirmed the budgeted costs for ballot and this funding is within Aberdeen Inspired’s overall budget
<b>Reputational</b>	Vetoing the proposals would deny businesses the opportunity to decide for themselves	M	Approving the recommendations.

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
	whether the BID should be renewed.		
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	The report and BID has a negative environmental effect	L	The BID is a consultee in all of the Council's interventions in the city centre to address climate impacts

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u></b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	The Business Improvement District directly supports the Policy Statement's aim to increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan.
<b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The Business Improvement District focuses on the city centre business sector and therefore the proposals support the overall stretch outcome target to increase tourism, leisure and hospitality employment.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The Business Improvement District are a key partner in delivery of some of the activities within Aberdeen 365 Events Plan and indirectly support place based activity in the city centre
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	Engagement with business is a key element of the Council's work to support the Regional Economic Strategy, the CCMP, and, more recently, its Socio-Economic Rescue Plan. The BID is an important group in engagement with city centre businesses, and the Tourism, Leisure, Retail and Hospitality sectors in particular.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 None

## **11. APPENDICES**

11.1 Aberdeen City Centre Business Improvement District Business Proposal (Term: 1st April 2021– 31st March 2026).

11.2 The Proposal in Appendix 1 refers to its supporting appendices some of which may contain exempt information. These are being circulated to members of the committee separately in confidence.

## **12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS**

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**ABERDEEN CITY CENTRE  
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

**BUSINESS PROPOSAL**

**TERM: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021– 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026**

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## **Business Proposal**

### **BID Proposal Compliance with Legislation**

In accordance with Business Improvement District (Scotland) legislation we acknowledge, as the BID Proposer, we must submit to Aberdeen City Council and Scottish Ministers the following in respect of BID Proposals, Renewal Proposals and Alteration Proposals: -

#### **1.0 A document, which demonstrates a cross section of at least 5% of the electorate, within the BID area supports the BID Proposals.**

Please refer to Appendix 1a (Support for the Bid), Appendix 1b (Support for the Bid), Appendix 1c (BID Champions) and Section 7.2 of the BID Proposal. Following the surveys of business and the initial canvassing, a total of 80 responses have been received to date, with the overwhelming majority indicating their support for the BID Proposal. When viewed in the wider context of all potential eligible voters, this confirmed that over 5% of the total number of eligible persons indicated their support for the BID, representing in excess of 10% of the overall rateable value.

#### **2.0 Summary of the consultation the BID has undertaken with those eligible to vote.**

The Aberdeen City Centre BID Renewal Steering Group oversaw the process of consultation with the businesses. The consultation took the form of hard copy surveys, meetings and events, letters, telephone calls, newsletters, e-newsletters, emails, local newspaper reports, website, social media and one to one consultations.

Please see Appendix 2 (Details of Consultation) and Section 7.0 for a 'Consultation Summary' document. Please see Appendix 2a (AI coverage, emails and surveys 2016-2020) for an overview of press coverage of the BID during the term and communication with members. Further sub appendices provide examples of:

- Appendix 2b – Survey
- Appendix 2c – Newsletter
- Appendix 2d – Annual Summary
- Appendix 2e – Networking Event

#### **3.0 The Proposed Business Plan**

A copy of the BID Business Plan which will be issued to all of the BID electorate is provided with this Proposal document – Please refer to Appendix 3 (BID Business Plan). There will, however, be four themes that the BID will focus upon in the coming five years:-

1. Promoting Our City Centre (ensuring Aberdeen is high on the horizon for visitors and investors);
2. Helping Your Business (creating the conditions to maximise opportunities for businesses);
3. Attractive City Centre (improving the city centre landscape);



## Business Proposal

4. Safe and Welcoming (ensuring there is a safe and welcoming physical presence for visitors)

Please refer to Appendix 2 (BID Business Plan) for the proposed project listing.

### **4.0 The Financial Arrangements of the BID body.**

Please refer to Section 13.2 Financial Management Arrangements on page 27 of this Proposal.

### **5.0 The Arrangements for periodically providing the LA and billing body with information on the finances of the BID body (i.e. after a successful ballot)**

The BID finances will form an integral part of a bi-monthly report issued to the BID Board of Directors. Two representatives from Aberdeen City Council do sit on the BID Board and will automatically be provided with the BID finance details. It is also expected that regular finance meetings with Aberdeen City Council will be held. An annual audit of the BID finances will also take place through an independent auditor.

### **6.0 The names and addresses of all those eligible to vote and a description (address) of each relevant property.**

See BID database provided at Appendix 4.

### **7.0 A notice in writing requesting that the local authority hold the ballot.**

In accordance with legislation, the attached 56 day letter, (Request to Hold a Ballot) at Appendix 5 will be issued to Aberdeen City Council by Mr Adrian Watson, Chief Executive Officer of Aberdeen Inspired, and member of the Renewal Steering Group in January 2021.

### **8.0 Provide the LA and billing body with such information as they shall reasonably require satisfying themselves the BID Proposer or BID body has enough funds to meet the costs of the BID ballot.**

Aberdeen City Centre BID has budgeted to cover the costs of the ballot. Please see Appendix 9.

### **9.0 A statement of the works or services to be provided, the name of the person responsible or body for the implementation (delivery) of these works and services and the status of such person/s; both on and after the date the BID Proposals come into effect.**

Please refer to Appendix 3 (BID Business Plan) for the proposed works and services.

On a successful renewal ballot outcome ~~the Aberdeen~~ BID Company Limited (company limited by guarantee) will continue, formed with directors elected from the eligible persons (the levy payers), limited to one eligible person from each eligible property. They will continue to oversee and direct the delivery of all the projects and services. See full details in section 6.3 on page 14 of the Proposal

## Business Proposal

document. They will retain staff to deliver the day-to-day BID projects and services, recruiting where necessary to replace others departing.

### **10.0 A statement of existing baseline services provided by the local authority, police and other agencies.**

Please refer to Appendix 6a (Baseline Services) and Appendix 6b (Policing Services).

### **11.0 A precise description of the geographical area of the BID, including a map, which defines exactly the boundaries of the BID area.**

See the GIS map and list of streets in the BID area on pages 12 to 13 of the BID Proposal.

### **12.0 A statement providing details of any additional financial contributions, or additional actions for the purpose of enabling the projects specified in the BID Proposals, i.e. where a BID project is expected to cost £X and the proposed levy raises a smaller amount £Y then the BID Proposals must state how that funding gap £X - £Y s to be met and by whom.**

The projects specified in the BID Proposal (see BID Project Income & Expenditure page 26) have been identified and the levy calculated and apportioned to deliver the projects as defined in the Proposed Projects section of this Proposal, without the requirement for additional contributions. It is expected that the BID will attract additional funding from other sources in each financial year, some as general funding and some project specific. However this has not been allowed for at this stage.

### **13.0 A statement of which aspects of the BID Proposals and or Business Plan may be altered without the need for an alteration ballot to be undertaken.**

The BID Board of Directors will have the authority to adapt or alter the projects and services from year to year to reflect any change in economic circumstances or any new opportunities that may arise. This will be in the best interests of the levy payers and without recourse to an alteration ballot.

Please refer to section 6.3 Management of the BID on page 14 of this Proposal for the statement.

### **14.0 A statement of the proposed start and end dates of the BID Arrangements and the term of the BID. The BID arrangements must commence no later than a year after the date of the statement.**

Following a successful renewal ballot on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 the Aberdeen City Centre BID will re-commence its activities on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. As the Aberdeen City Centre BID will be for a term of five years, it will cease its activities on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

### **15.0 BID Proposals shall specify the apportionment of BID levy in respect of relevant properties and who will be liable to pay the levy: - proprietors, tenants, occupiers or if appropriate a specific business sector or sectors or businesses who will participate. It is advisable to include caps, thresholds, or other arrangements reflecting local circumstances or ability to pay.**

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The BID improvement levy will be paid by the occupier (the eligible person liable to pay the non-domestic rate), however, the property owner will be liable to pay the levy where a property is vacant or empty on the day the levy invoice is issued and for all the period thereafter when the property is vacant.

Please refer to Section 9 The BID Levy on page 18 of this Proposal for full details of the BID Levy.

### **16.0 Confirmation the levy is to be calculated as a % of the RV or how the charge was arrived at.**

It has been agreed by the BID Renewal Steering Group (see Minutes dated 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at Appendix 10) that the levy rate will be 0.5% of the rateable value of the property in financial year 2021-22 on the day of the ballot (25<sup>th</sup> March 2021) and 1% in each year thereafter for the remaining term of the BID. Please see Appendix 11 and Section 9 on pages 18 to 21 of this Proposal for full details of how the charge was arrived at and details of the BID Levy.

### **17.0 Confirmation the % levy or fee is to be calculated on the RV of the property on the date of the ballot or, if not, another date that is the date, which will be used to calculate the levy or fee over the term of the BID.**

The 1% levy is based on the rateable value of the property on the day of the ballot (25<sup>th</sup> March 2021). The year one proposed levy charge is calculated at 0.5% of the rateable value of the property on the day of the ballot (25<sup>th</sup> March 2021).

Please Refer to Section 9 on pages 18 to 21 of this Proposal for full details of the BID Levy.

### **18.0 The apportionment of the levy between proprietors, tenants and occupiers – providing the BID is including tenants and proprietors in its proposals.**

The occupier (the eligible person liable to pay the non-domestic rate) will be liable for the payment of the levy.

The BID Proposal does not include proprietors (property owners) except where the eligible property is vacant or empty when the property owner will be liable for the payment of the levy.

Please Refer to Section 9 The BID Levy on pages 18 to 21 of this Proposal for full details of the BID Levy.

### **19.0 A statement as to how the BID Board arrived at who will pay the levy, the percentage levy and how the levy will be split between proprietors, tenants and occupiers.**

The BID Renewal Steering Group set the levy fee; the streets included in the BID and voted on who will pay the levy. A copy of the Minutes dated 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at which this was decided is attached at Appendix 10. The geographic boundary is based on the city centre area. The levy amount is based on the amount required to carry out the projects in the business plan and

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discussions with businesses on what they believe is reasonable. The levy will be paid by the occupier (the eligible person liable to pay the non-domestic rate).

The decision to adopt the levy table and BID area was taken with the agreement of all of the members of the Renewal Steering Group. Please see Appendix 10 (Renewal Steering Group Minutes) and Appendix 8 (Renewal Steering Group Agreement).

Please also refer to Section 9 The BID levy on page 18 of this Proposal for full details of the BID Levy.

### **20.0 Whether any future re-assessment of RV of the property by the Rates Assessor will or will not be taken into account in the calculation of the levy**

It has been agreed by the BID Board, the levy will be calculated on the Rateable Value of the properties in the BID area on the day of the ballot. Should there be a Rates Revaluation in 2023 the BID levy will then be based on the property RV after the revaluation.

### **21.0 A statement on why groups or individual businesses are exempt or receive a levy discount**

See page 19 for details of all exemptions to the levy. The shopping centres were given a reduced levy on the basis that the tenants are subject to a service charge for additional services provided by the centre management.

### **22.0 A statement on whether the levy will be index linked.**

Although the BID levy can be subject to an annual increase in line with the Retail Price Index, to account for inflation – up to a maximum of 2.5% on the previous year's levy, during the current economic situation Aberdeen City Centre BID's Board of Directors have agreed not to apply this during the lifetime of the next BID ~~term cycle~~.

### **23.0 A statement on whether any of the costs incurred in developing the BID Proposals, holding of the ballot, or implementing the BID arrangements are to be recovered through the BID levy.**

The costs for developing the BID renewal proposal have been exclusively met from the 2020-21 budget.

### **24.0 The constitution of the BID Company to be formed and its legal status. A statement on who will administer the BID, details regarding the BID board and the BID body and those who drew up BID Proposals and Business Plan.**

Please refer to section 6.3 Management of the BID on pages 14 of this proposal for details on how the BID Company will continue to be administered.

The BID Company ~~is will be~~ a not for profit limited liability company and ~~is will be~~ administered by the Board of Directors who will be drawn from the eligible persons (liable to pay the levy) but

## **Business Proposal**

restricted to one eligible person per eligible property. The projects will be delivered by the BID team recruited by the Board of Directors. For full details see Section 6.3 on page 14 of the Proposal document. Innes Walker, City Centre Manager, prepared the Aberdeen City Centre BID Proposal and Business Plan in full consultation with and support from the Aberdeen City Centre BID Renewal Steering Group.

### **25.0 The methodology for BID levy payers to nominate themselves or others to the BID Board of Directors and the proposed make-up of the BID Board.**

Every eligible person that pays the levy will have the opportunity to nominate themselves or someone else from within the BID area to be elected onto the Company Board. Directors will be limited to one eligible person per eligible property.

See section 6.3 on page 14 of the BID Proposal for full details on how levy payers can participate on the future Aberdeen BID Company Board of Directors.

### **26.0 A statement on how the BID Proposals will be publicised prior to the ballot.**

The BID Proposer will send a copy of the BID Business Plan to all persons eligible to vote on the Proposals. Should any eligible person require a copy of the BID Proposal, a copy will be provided on request. The Proposal and Business Plan will also feature prominently on the Aberdeen City Centre BID website at [www.aberdeeninspired.com](http://www.aberdeeninspired.com)

*“Business” or variations of the word “business” are used throughout this document. The word “business” in this context refers to property owners or tenants and occupiers of properties who are liable to pay the non-domestic rate (NDR), whether they pay business rates or not. This includes all properties listed on the Scottish Assessors Association Portal (website) with a non-domestic rateable value, many of whom may be a charitable organisation, public sector organization, social enterprise or community group who may not consider themselves to be a business.*

## Business Proposal

### 1.0 Foreword by BID Steering Group Chair

I am delighted to present this Aberdeen Inspired's (Aberdeen BID) renewal proposal, which outlines our priorities and how we will build on the achievements of the past 5 five year term (2016/21) in promoting and enhancing the city centre of Aberdeen.

A BID 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 where the local business community and the statutory authorities work together on projects that will benefit the local economy and local businesses. Aberdeen BID has been an exemplar in this regard, be it driving the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan forward or bringing world class events to our streets such as Nuart (Aberdeen) International Street Art Festival, which alone brought tens of thousands to Aberdeen City Centre and won us the European BID of the Year 2017/18. I can assure you that If we are successful at renewal (March 2021) and we gain our third term, there will be no let up. We know only too well the scale of the challenge to Aberdeen, but it will take a collective response to bring us through this painful transition and the Aberdeen BID is integral to this.

Supporting Aberdeen's BID is a great opportunity to work together and make the changes we all want. The cost to our businesses is low and through Aberdeen BID we can access external assistance and funding not available to individual businesses. We have a proven track record over the past five years, where we have leveraged in funding from both local and national sources, that few, if any, BIDs across the UK can match.

All the proposed improvements, events and initiatives were ideas initially from you, which came out in our surveys and consultations. Every business in the area has had the opportunity to let us know what their priorities are. By getting involved with Aberdeen BID, we can work together to increase footfall, stimulate investment and enhance the reputation of our city centre. The purpose of Aberdeen's BID is to support our businesses, increase trade and improve our business environment. It lobbies at a local, national and international level and is the positive voice of for Aberdeen City Centre. I think we all understand that if ever there was a time for a BID to help us through these challenging times for our city centre it is now.

You can find more information on our website at [www.aberdeeninspired.com](http://www.aberdeeninspired.com), or for more general or national information refer to [www.improvementdistricts.scot](http://www.improvementdistricts.scot).

A notice of ballot will be sent to all eligible persons on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February 2021, along with the ballot papers. Those eligible to vote will have 6 weeks to cast their vote before the ballot closes at **5pm on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021**. Ballot papers received after this date and time will be null and void.

I have been involved in business in Aberdeen for several years and know a lot of the business people in the city centre. I would ask you all to vote YES and 'Back the BID' so that we can work together to make the city centre better. Positive Thinking for our City Centre!

Chair – Allan Henderson

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### **2.0 Executive Summary**

#### **2.1 Mission Statement of the Aberdeen BID**

Aberdeen Inspired – Means Business. ‘To attract, sustain and boost business and investment in Aberdeen City Centre through influence, inspiration and innovation.’

#### **2.2 Aims and Objectives of the Aberdeen City Centre BID**

Aberdeen Inspired’s aim is to deliver projects, initiatives and services that will enhance and improve the business environment within Aberdeen City Centre, to collectively benefit everyone - businesses, customers and visitors alike.

The objectives of the BID are: -

- To improve the economic opportunities for the businesses in the city centre, supporting them to reopen and flourish
- Adapt and act to counter the economic effects of the global pandemic
- Promoting a safe and secure city centre, to maximise footfall
- Work towards ‘renaissance’ of our city centre and a return to delivering internationally acclaimed events, such as Nuart and the Aberdeen International Comedy Festival
- Developing an attractive city centre by maximising, opportunities in pedestrianisation, transportation, green space activation and events
- Promoting our city centre by strong Marketing and Communications which underpin everything we do via the ‘Heart of our City’ campaign and our Communications Plan
- Monitor and increase economic activity (via business intelligence sources related to spend)
- Deliver the City Centre Masterplan and Aberdeen Inspired Business Plan
- Create a safe and welcoming environment in the city centre (to be measured by continued scrutiny under Purple Flag/Police Scotland crime figures)
- To make the BID “cost neutral” for each business
- To address the issues of individual sectors
- To improve businesses relationships with each other, the local authority and the community
- To market the area to a local, regional, national and international audience
- To give businesses a strong, unified voice
- To support local voluntary groups whose aims align with the BID
- Develop strong and effective collaborations with Aberdeen City Council, business leaders and other stakeholders, to deliver the City Centre Masterplan

#### **2.3 Key Findings**

The BID Board has overseen considerable research to discover what the businesses of Aberdeen would like the BID to continue to deliver and future projects, services and initiatives. The research established the continued need for a BID and confirms the following key aspects to deliver a successful ballot and a successful BID are in place.

- Local need for a BID is strongly identified.
- The BID area is logical and clearly defined.
- Support of the Local Authority at both officer and political level.

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- Support of Police Scotland.
- Support of Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce.
- Support of the Federation of Small Businesses.
- Support of the Scottish Council for Development @ Industry.
- Support of Visit Aberdeenshire
- Support of Aberdeen University
- Support of Robert Gordon University
- Support of Aberdeen Performing Arts
- Aberdeen City Council to provide three-year funding of £125,000 per annum (2021-23) for the Nuart (Aberdeen) Street Art International Festival.
- The BID levy with both local authority and Scottish Government support in year one is sufficient to deliver the anticipated projects in the business plan.

### **3.0 Introduction**

#### **3.1 What is a Business Improvement District (BID)?**

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a geographically defined area, where businesses come together and agree to invest collectively in projects and services that the businesses believe will improve their trading environment. BID projects are new and additional projects and services; they do not replace services that are already provided by Aberdeen City Council and other statutory bodies.

BIDs are developed, managed and paid for by the non-domestic sector by means of a compulsory levy, which the eligible persons in the proposed BID area must vote in favour of before the BID can continue. Each eligible person liable to pay the BID levy will be able to vote on whether or not the BID goes ahead.

#### **3.2 Background to BIDs**

The first BID was established, 50 years ago, in Bloor West Village, Toronto, Canada, by the district's business community. The district's businesses were increasingly coming under pressure from new enclosed shopping malls being developed outside their area, diverting shoppers away from the traditional shopping area. As a result, some businesses were forced to cease trading and the area began to look tired and neglected

To stop the haemorrhage of deserting shoppers, local businesses fought back to revitalise the area. They successfully lobbied for legislation for all the businesses, in the proposed BID area, to pay a levy. The levy money was used to improve the physical appearance of the area, and then promote the district as a vibrant, attractive and safe place to work, shop and live. The strategy paid off and shoppers started to return to the district in large numbers.

The success of the Bloor West Village BID paved the way for future BIDs, not only in Toronto; but spreading throughout Canada, and the USA in the late 1960's and 1970's. Today there are well over 1800 successful BIDs worldwide.

An additional measure of BIDs success is in the renewal process. Most BIDs run for a period of five years with the vast majority continuing, for consecutive terms, when they come up for renewal. In Scotland, to date, 20 operational BIDs have successfully renewed their mandate for second or third BID terms demonstrating that the businesses value the projects and services delivered by the BIDs. BIDs can support regeneration, grow local economies, create local employment and create a cleaner,



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safer trading environment. A key element to their success is that the local businesses take ownership and responsibility for their trading environment, identifying the projects necessary to resolve common problems and issues, and overseeing their implementation, whilst also contributing to the future direction of the town and its future development.

BID legislation was passed in Scotland in 2006 with the Scottish Government funding 6 pilot projects in March 2006. The Scottish Government fully supports the development of BIDs in Scotland.

As at 9 November 2020 there are 37 fully operational BIDs in Scotland with a further 30 in development including our BID.

### **4.0 Aberdeen City Centre's Position**

#### **4.1 Why does Aberdeen City Centre need a BID?**

For several decades, Aberdeen has been the United Kingdom and indeed Europe's oil and gas capital and has consequently enjoyed strong growth. However, it is well documented that this industry is now in decline and has struggled over the past five years. Consequently, Aberdeen's economy is experiencing considerable change, with the retail and hospitality sectors adversely affected through reduction in footfall. COVID-19 has only accelerated these challenges to Aberdeen City Centre, with national directives encouraging home working. This has caused yet further reductions to footfall figures with the loss of a captive audience in the office sector. Moreover, it has led to yet further expedient growth in on-line sales, with 'bricks and mortar' retail suffering the most. Both commercial and residential properties are seeing consistent falls in value, bucking the national trend. Aberdeen is currently experiencing the lowest job vacancies and fastest growing unemployment figures in Scotland, with more redundancies still in the pipeline than anywhere else in the country.

As a consequence, the need for a Business Improvement District (BID) in the heart of the city has never been greater. Aberdeen Inspired has been both nationally and internationally recognised (European BID of the year 2017/18) for its strategic and collaborative approach, and there has never been a time where it has been more needed in being that positive voice for Aberdeen City Centre and rallying partners and businesses in bringing the city centre through the recovery stage. The BID can continue to successfully lobby the local authority, government and other organisations in bringing substantial improvements to Aberdeen City Centre and with that deliver on the much needed next strands of the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan (ACCP). The BID can look back on the last term as being successful in this regard, leveraging in considerable sums of finance to the city centre that far exceeds most other BIDs in the UK, but there is clearly still much to do.

After consultations with businesses from a range of sectors and geographic locations across the city centre, it became clear there was commonality in the problems that they had. There was a desire to see Aberdeen prosper and a real appetite to bring the city centre through its painful transition and re-purpose it for many decades to come. They all see Aberdeen Inspired playing a key role in this.

The BID can continue to work with partners across the private, public and third sectors in bringing in more pedestrian friendly areas through the ACCP, thus meeting green emission targets and making the city centre a more attractive destination. Recently the BID supported the local authority's successful bid to Nestrans to introduce the most ambitious 'Spaces for People' programme of any town or city centre in the country, to essentially allow the city centre to open up safely. With the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) now complete it is clear there is less vehicular traffic needlessly coming into the city centre and this presents opportunity as we re-vision the city centre space.

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When safe to do so, levy payers continue to crave large scale and events being brought to the city centre. The BID leads on, amongst others, the Christmas Festival, the Aberdeen International Comedy Festival, Nuart International Street Art Festival, Aberdeen Restaurant Weeks and the Inspired Nights Street Food/Music event. However the BID has an ambition to build on this in the next term, again positioning Aberdeen as a 'go to' destination which will help our visitor economy, as we look to diversify in the wake of the oil & gas decline. The BID has been very successful in pulling in funding for many of the events from both public and private funding streams, with potential to do much more in the next term. It is seen as key cultural partner on the north-east of Scotland.

The BID will also continue to marshal partners, not least Police Scotland and NHS Grampian in ensuring the city centre is safe and is re-accredited with the esteemed Purple Flag award for being safe and welcoming. Aberdeen Inspired has been recognised as a UK lead in this regard. We all understand that safety is fundamental and the confidence the Purple Flag brings to the north-east public, student population and visitors cannot be underestimated and has to continue.

### **4.2 The History of BIDs in Aberdeen**

Aberdeen was introduced to the BID concept in 2011, when eligible city centre businesses voted in favour of establishing a Business Improvement District, administered through the management company 'Aberdeen Inspired' and guided by a Board of Directors drawn from BID levy-payers. 'Aberdeen Inspired' has for over four years acted as the vehicle for dedicated staff to devote time and effort across a number of inter-linked priorities to maintain the city centre's competitiveness and build on the historic value of the area, in the process attracting significant additional inward investment. The support of the Scottish Government and Aberdeen City Council have been integral to this development.

### **4.3 How will Aberdeen City Centre benefit from a BID?**

All businesses in the city centre benefit from the projects and services the BID currently delivers: -

- Support for existing groups and organisations
- An improved customer perception of accessibility and parking availability
- Improved customer knowledge of goods and services in the City Centre
- Increased marketing to local, regional, national and global customers
- Access to funding to reduce property improvement costs
- Cost reduction through professional negotiation on utility bills
- Cost reduction through collective investment and joint promotion
- An increased number of visitors, local, national and international
- Access to funding and support not available to individuals or businesses
- A local voice for businesses - business opinions included in local policy and local developments.
- Better trained staff to improve customer service
- Increased B2B sales opportunities
- Increased networking opportunities
- Improved signage
- Increased use of technology to solve local problems
- Projects to increase shop diversity and lower vacant unit rates
- A continued safe trading environment with increased sense of security and less stock loss
- Increased cultural offering for businesses and public like

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- Increasing eco-friendly strategies
- Support for enhanced improvements to the City Centre through the City Centre Masterplan

### 4.4 Local Authority Support

A BID is a business led regeneration strategy, which contributes to the wider regeneration aspirations of the public sector and the local community. It is essential the BID has the support of the local authority and access to its expertise over the BID term.

Aberdeen City Council have been supportive of the BID's renewal process with one senior Council Officer attending board meetings, as well as playing a significant role of the Board of Directors.

A crucial element of the BID is to establish a Baseline Service Agreement (an agreement on which services are already provided to the area by Aberdeen City Council), to ensure that any project or service provided by the BID is **additional** to the statutory services that the local authority already provide. The BID Renewal Steering Group has agreed that Aberdeen City Council, as a public body subject to external scrutiny, should manage the formal ballot on behalf of the BID Proposer.

Aberdeen City Council shall (under section 41 of the Representation of people Act 1983 and The Business Improvement Districts (Scotland) Regulations 2007) undertake and manage the postal ballot.

### 5.0 The BID Area

The BID area is generally focused on the historical city centre. Through one-to-one consultations, it became clear that there were common issues crossing different sectors.

The BID team have calculated that this equates to circa 802 business properties, the eligible person of which will be entitled to vote during February and March 2021. Following a successful ballot all eligible persons ([the person liable to pay the non-domestic rate](#)) within the BID area will be required to pay the BID levy.

### 5.1 The BID Map and Streets

#### Why was this area chosen?

The following streets were chosen to be included in the BID area as consultations with businesses in this area highlighted several common issues of concern that could be addressed by a BID.

Adelphi	Exchequer Row	Shiprow
Alford Place	Flourmill Lane	South Silver Street
Back Wynd	Gaelic Lane	St Andrew Street
Bath Street	Gallowgate (as far as Spring Garden)	St Mary's Place
Belmont Street	George Street (as far as No. 230)	St. Nicholas Centre
Berry Street	Golden Square	St Nicholas Lane
Bon Accord Centre	Guild Street	St Nicholas Street
Bon Accord Square	Hadden Street	Stirling Street
Bon Accord Street (as far as East Craibstone Street)	Harriet Street	Summer Street
Bon Accord Terrace	Holburn Street (as far as No. 70)	The Academy
Bridge Place	Huntly Street	The Galleria
Bridge Street	John Street	The Green

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Broad Street	King Street (as far as East and West North Streets)	Thistle Street
Carmelite Street	Justice Mill Lane	Thistle Lane
Carnegie's Brae	Langstane Place	Thistle Place
Castlegate	Little Belmont Street	Trinity Centre
Castle Street	Loch Street	Trinity Street
Chapel Street	Market Street (as far as Union Square Shopping Mall)	Union Glen
College Street	McCombies Court	Union Row
Correction Wynd	Netherkirkgate	Union Square Shopping Mall
Crimon Place	North Silver Street	Union Street
Crown Street (as far as No. 27)	Queen Street	Union Terrace
Dee Street (as far as No. 16)	Rennies Wynd	Union Wynd
Denburn Road	Rose Street (as far as No. 67)	Upperkirkgate
Diamond Lane	Rosemount Viaduct	Wapping Street
Diamond Street	Ruby Lane	West Craibstone Street
East Craibstone Street	Schoolhill	Windmill Brae



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There are around 802 eligible properties located in the BID area, excluding a small number currently under reconstruction.

### 6.0 BID Management

#### 6.1 BID Staff

The Project Manager for the BID is Innes Walker, City Centre Manager, while the BID Development Co-ordinator is Brian Morrice. They are both accountable to the BID Renewal Steering Group.

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### 6.2 BID Renewal Steering Group

The BID Renewal Steering Group is made up from a cross-section of the business community in the area and includes one senior Council Officer, who is able to offer advice on matters surrounding the local authority. The Renewal Steering Group provides direction to the development of the BID and BID development staff. Ultimately all key decisions relating to the developing BID have been taken by the BID Renewal Steering Group, who are as follows:

Name	Sector	Name	Sector
Elaine Farquharson-Black	Office	Zoe Ogilvie	Office
Allan Henderson	Hospitality		
Derren McRae	Hospitality		
Ryan Crichton	Office		
Craig Stevenson	Retail		
Steve Whyte	Council		

### 6.3 Management of the BID

Following a successful yes vote, the management and operation of the BID will be undertaken by the BID management company 'Aberdeen Inspired', with the new business plan commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

The Company will operate in a transparent way, answerable to the businesses in the area. There will be a detailed set of protocols which will cover the management of the BID Company and billing, collection and transfer of the levy.

A Board of Directors has been established, comprising up to 15 individuals. Every eligible person that pays the levy will have the opportunity to nominate themselves or someone else from within the BID area to be elected onto the Company Board, but limited to one eligible person from each eligible property. The Company will be run by the businesses for the businesses. This Board will be responsible for all decisions relating to staff, contracts, the delivery of the approved business plan and other activities generated by the BID.

The Board will be representative of the businesses and stakeholders in the area. The Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer will be elected from the directors of the Board. The Board will include two representatives from Aberdeen City Council. Other non-voting members or local groups may be co-opted onto the Board at the Board's discretion.

The BID Company Board will have the authority to adapt or alter the projects and services from year to year to reflect any change in economic circumstances or any new opportunities that may arise. This will be in the best interests of the businesses and without recourse to an alteration ballot.

The Board of Directors will reserve the right to consider creating a charitable arm of the company to enable it to secure additional funding that can only be sourced with charitable status.

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### **7.0 The Consultation Process**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

Due to the impact of the global pandemic and both national and local lock down restrictions, the consultation process required to be curtailed and condensed. Initial BID consultation was undertaken with businesses in the form of one-to-one interviews and this led to the creation of a specific business survey that were sent or delivered to all businesses in the BID area. Thereafter, Business Engagement staff physically visited numerous businesses on a one-to-one basis to firstly confirm contact details, and secondly to assess opinions on ways to enhance and improve the BID area and give more incentive to visit and invest in the city centre. These, in turn, laid the foundations for the BID Proposal and Business Plan.

In addition, 6 bespoke geographic Business Network were employed to brief business in relation to the city centre Recovery and Socio-economic Rescue Plans, developed in conjunction with Aberdeen City Council. These networks were also used to consult groups of city centre businesses and to inform the business plan and priorities.

In all, businesses have received letters, emails, telephone calls, weekly newsletters, newspaper articles, one-to-one visits throughout the BID development process to keep them informed of progress. The website [www.aberdeeninspired.com](http://www.aberdeeninspired.com) has been kept fully updated with information throughout the development of the BID.

New businesses to the BID area have also received personal visits on a one-to-one basis to inform them about BIDs.

As the ballot date approaches it is planned to continue to visit as many businesses as possible to discuss the proposed projects and services that the businesses have indicated they would like the BID to deliver.

BID legislation requires that before a ballot can take place, a minimum of 5% of the eligible persons must indicate that they are in favour of a BID. The results of polls on whether the BID proposal was supported resulted in 52 positive responses, or 6.5% of the total number of 802 individuals<sup>1</sup>. Please refer to Appendix 1 (Support for the BID) where a list of eligible persons indicating a positive response in consultations and the survey is provided.

Full details of the consultation process is contained in Appendix 2

#### **7.2 Business Survey**

1-to-1 consultations were carried out with eligible persons representing 10% of those eligible to vote.

Hard copy paper questionnaires were delivered to businesses in the city centre.

The questionnaires were hand delivered where possible, if not, posted to the property within the proposed BID area. The businesses were also given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire

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<sup>1</sup> As at 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015

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on-line. The purpose of the questionnaire survey was to consult with the businesses within the BID area and determine their issues and concerns. The survey also sought to establish views and opinions on specific identified issues relating to the area.

The BID Board considered the response from the 1-to-1 consultations, survey and public meetings as being sufficient to decide on the projects and services proposed in the business plan.

BID legislation requires that before a ballot can take place, a minimum of 5% of the electorate must indicate that they are in favour of a BID. The results of the consultations (both one to one and surveys) indicate that 52 eligible persons (6.5%) are in favour of the BID - in terms of rateable value this equates to 16.33%.

Please refer to Appendix 1 (Support for the BID) where a list of eligible persons indicating a positive response in consultations and the survey is provided.

### **7.3 The Key Findings**

1-to-1 consultations were carried out with eligible persons representing 10% of those eligible to vote.

Hard copy paper questionnaires were delivered to 80 businesses in the city centre with 83% responding.

The questionnaires were hand delivered where possible, if not, posted to the property within the proposed BID area. The purpose of the questionnaire survey was to consult with the businesses within the BID area and determine their issues and concerns. The survey also sought to establish views and opinions on specific identified issues relating to the area.

The BID Board considered the response from the 1-to-1 consultations, survey and public meetings as being sufficient to decide on the projects and services proposed in the business plan.

BID legislation requires that before a ballot can take place, a minimum of 5% of the electorate must indicate that they are in favour of a BID. The results of the consultations (both one to one and surveys) indicate that 52 eligible persons (6.5%) are in favour of the BID - in terms of rateable value this equates to 16.33%.

Please refer to Appendix 1 (Support for the BID) where a list of eligible persons indicating a positive response in consultations and the survey is provided.

### **Sector Specific Survey**

- Widespread agreement that the priorities remain the same
- That Aberdeen Inspired has created a strong portfolio of events and festivals which clearly generates footfall and with that spend. Encouraged to continue to in this vain and work with partners in further building an ambitious programme
- Support was strong for Purple Flag (safe & welcoming) and a recognition that Aberdeen Inspired should continue to lead this partnership. Concerns over street begging and a desire to see both further diversionary measures in place and where necessary enforcement where appropriate. Encouraged to ensure the city centre is kept clean and tidy.
- Support for Aberdeen Inspired to continue to play a leading role in delivering the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and leveraging in significant capital sums from both local and

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national government, and the private sector to re-purpose the city centre and bring it through the COVID-19 Recovery stage. To include more pedestrian friendly areas, but still be accessible to the city and wider north-east public.

- Continue to be the positive voice for the city centre and lobby at a local, national and international level.
- Continue to build on the business network model and be that conduit between businesses on the ground and other public/governmental/business agencies.
- Continue to provide the city centre management response for both daytime and evening economies.
- Develop further eco-friendly initiatives and green space.
- Specific support for 'bricks and mortar' retail, further development of gift card.
- Development of further way-showing and suspended signage to help the public navigate around the city centre.

### **8.0 Proposed Improvements**

We believe that the best way to achieve lasting and sustainable change, and best value for money, is by working in partnership, so where appropriate we will work strategically with: Aberdeen City Council, Visit Scotland, Police Scotland, Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Scottish Council for Development @ Industry, Aberdeen University, Robert Gordons University and College, North East College and Aberdeen Performing Arts.

The proposed projects will be progressed over the five-year period of the BID. Some projects will be provided on an annual basis while others are one-off projects. The time frame for delivering the projects will be decided by the Board of Directors within the agreed budget.

The detailed projects costs are estimates only. The actual cost of the projects will depend on a variety of factors and will not be definitive until competitive tenders have been submitted where necessary. Some of the projects may be subject to planning permission and other statutory approval.

#### **Projects and Services**

The projects will be based on the following themes, individual projects and services are detailed in the Business Plan;

1. Promoting Our City Centre;
2. Helping Your Business;
3. Attractive City Centre;
4. Safe and Welcoming.

These themes and the projects that follow are based on feedback from businesses. Those scheduled for Year 1 (i.e. 2021-22) are in more detail whilst Years 2 to 5 are less so at this stage, although the themes and broad range of projects are still described. Likewise the budget allocation over the five years is based on 'best estimates' at this stage as additional specific project funding will be sought as projects become more clearly defined and specified.



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The proposed projects will be progressed over the five-year period of the BID. Some projects will be provided on an annual basis while others are one-off projects. The time frame for delivering the projects will be decided by the Board of Directors within the agreed budget.

The detailed projects costs are estimates only. The actual cost of the projects will depend on a variety of factors and will not be definitive until competitive tenders have been submitted where necessary. Some of the projects may be subject to planning permission and other statutory approval.

The First Year's projects and services are fully detailed in the BID Business Plan at Section Appendix 3, but the wider budget and spending per theme is outlined below.

### Projected Five Year Budget

<b>Income</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>Total</b>
BID Levy	£490,000	£980,000	£980,000	£980,000	£980,000	£4,410,000
Additional Project Funding	£465,000	£465,000	£520,000	£650,000	£900,000	£3,000,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£955,000</b>	<b>£1,445,000</b>	<b>£1,500,000</b>	<b>£1,630,000</b>	<b>£1,880,000</b>	<b>£7,410,000</b>

<b>Theme Expenditure</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>Total</b>
Promoting Our City Centre	£480,000	£575,000	£600,000	£675,000	£775,000	£3,105,000
Helping Your Business	£160,000	£235,000	£240,000	£250,000	£300,000	£1,185,000
Attractive City Centre	£125,000	£195,000	£200,000	£220,000	£250,000	£990,000
Safe and Welcoming	£125,000	£195,000	£200,000	£220,000	£250,000	£990,000
Contingency 5%	£40,000	£65,000	£74,000	£75,000	£76,500	£330,500
<b>Total Theme Spend</b>	<b>£930,000</b>	<b>£1,265,000</b>	<b>£1,314,000</b>	<b>£1,440,000</b>	<b>£1,651,500</b>	<b>£6,600,500</b>

<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>Total</b>
Theme Spend	£930,000	£1,265,000	£1,314,000	£1,440,000	£1,651,500	£6,600,500
Staff Costs	£115,000	£118,000	£122,000	£125,000	£128,500	£608,500
Other Operating Costs	£60,000	£62,000	£64,000	£65,000	£100,000	£351,000
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>£1,105,000</b>	<b>£1,445,000</b>	<b>£1,500,000</b>	<b>£1,630,000</b>	<b>£1,880,000</b>	<b>£7,560,000</b>

Note: Budget may be transferred between projects (e.g. due to projects being amended or postponed) as the needs of the business dictate on the authority and instruction of the BID Board without resorting to an alteration ballot.

## Business Proposal

### 9.0 The BID Levy

#### 9.1 Who will pay the levy?

A BID 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. It has been agreed by the BID Renewal Steering Group that the rate will comprise a 0.5% levy based on the rateable value of the property at the time of the ballot (25<sup>th</sup> March 2021) and 1% in each year thereafter throughout the five-year lifetime of the BID. The threshold for payment of the levy is a non-domestic rateable value of £27,500 and above. The BID levy will be calculated on the Rateable Value of the properties in the BID area on the day of the ballot. Should there be a Rates Revaluation in 2023 the BID levy will then be based on the property RV after the revaluation. In the event of doubt, the rateable value of any commercial premises in Scotland can be accessed by searching on the Scottish Assessor's Association website; [www.saa.gov.uk](http://www.saa.gov.uk).

- There are around 802 business properties in Aberdeen's BID area (see page 13 for a map), which will together generate a total income of around £980,000 per annum, and an estimated total levy income of £4.4m over five years. This does not include voluntary or external funding contributions.
- All eligible non-domestic properties (i.e. the eligible person, those who are liable to pay the non-domestic rate) that are listed on the Local Assessor's Valuation Roll on the ballot date will be liable.
- There are currently around 501<sup>[1]</sup> separate eligible persons in respect of all the properties, with a significant number being responsible, individually or corporately, for more than one property.
- The levy payments are not linked to what businesses actually pay in rates but are based on the rateable value of the property.
- The levy must be paid in one payment within 28 days from the date of the levy invoice although in the case of a special arrangement with the billing body this may be split up into a maximum of four instalments.
- However, the property owner will be liable to pay the levy where the property is vacant on the day the levy invoice is issued and for all of the period thereafter while the property is vacant.
- Any new commercial development, sub division of existing properties or merging of properties or new businesses with a non-domestic rateable valuation of or above the threshold coming in to the BID area during the five-year lifetime of the BID will be liable for the levy.
- Where a property is taken out of rating (e.g. due to demolition or a split or merger) the BID levy for that individual property will be due up to the date of the removal from the Rating List and the annual BID levy will be apportioned accordingly.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Manually counted on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015

## Business Proposal

### 9.2 Exclusions

The BID Board decided to exclude premises that have a rateable value of under £27,500. These premises can pay a voluntary levy and become an “associate member” should they wish, details of which are given in the BID Business Plan.

#### Voluntary contributions and other funding

The BID will endeavour to secure voluntary contributions from owners of business properties outwith the BID area, or owners of properties businesses who fall below the current threshold, as well as other external funding partners where possible. These voluntary contributions, which will inevitably vary from year to year, will be paid into the Aberdeen BID Revenue Account.

In 2019-20 this accounted for another £534,000 on top of the levy. Whilst this amount cannot be assumed every year, (as some grants are for specific projects), it is hoped that a similar level of additional funding will be sought year on year.

The BID Board decided that there is no benefit from being part of the BID to the following categories of property and therefore are exempt from paying the levy: - Ad-spaces, Fishing Lodge, Nursing Homes, Non-Retail Charity, Places of Worship, Health Care Centre, ATM's, The War Veterans Association, the Community Employment Trust and the Girl Guide Association Food Banks.

### 9.3 The Levy Table

The table below provides an annual, monthly and daily cost of BID membership, primarily as a mechanism to illustrate to levy-payers the comparatively inexpensive nature of membership.

Rateable Value of Business	Annual Cost of 1% Levy	Monthly Cost of 1% Levy	Daily Cost of 1% Levy
£27,500	£275	£22.91	75p
£50,000	£500	£41.66	£1.36
£100,000	£1,000	£83.33	£2.73
£250,000	£2,500	£208.33	£6.84
£500,000	£5,000	£416.66	£13.69

Rateable Value Band	No. of businesses	Total Rateable Value
£25K - £27.5K	10	£263,000
£27.5K - £30K	31	£904,750
£30K - £40K	135	£4,736,450
£40K - £60K	176	£8,630,000
£60K - £100K	161	£12,616,200
£100K - £200K	169	£24,736,500
£200K - £500K	90	£26,434,500
£500K+	30	£25,113,000

## Business Proposal

Total	802	£103,434,400 <sup>2</sup>
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Business Sector	No. of businesses	% of businesses
Retail	292	36%
Hospitality/Leisure	221	28%
Offices/Financial	242	30%
Council/Government	7	1%
Others	40	5%
Total	802	100%

### 9.4 Collection of the BID Levy

Aberdeen City Council will collect the investment levy on behalf of the BID, as this will be an efficient, safe and cost effective method of collection. Aberdeen City Council will lodge the levy within a BID Revenue Account. The BID levy can only be drawn down by the Board of Directors of the BID to allow the delivery of the business plan.

The BID Revenue Account and levy cannot be accessed by Aberdeen City Council nor can it be used by the Council as an additional source of income.

The first BID levy will be due in April 2021, and on the first day of each financial year thereafter that the BID is in operation. Payment must be made within 28 days from the date of the levy invoice.

### 9.5 Enforcement

In the event of any non-payment of the BID improvement levy, it will be strongly pursued by Aberdeen City Council (as the billing body) using the recovery powers available to the Council to ensure complete fairness to all the businesses that have paid. Aberdeen City 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.

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<sup>2</sup> This figure does not take into account exemptions or discounts for business properties.

## **Business Proposal**

### **10.0 The Voting Process**

#### **10.1 Pre-Ballot**

The BID Proposer must submit the BID Proposals to the Local Authority, the Scottish Ministers and the billing body at least 98 days in advance of the ballot date and of their intention to put the BID Proposals to ballot. The local authority then has 28 days in which to veto or not the BID Proposals.

A 'Notice of Ballot' will be issued at least 42 days before the day of ballot.

The BID Proposer will make available a copy of the BID Proposal to any person who is eligible to vote on the BID Proposals who requests a copy. Requests for a copy should, in the first instance, be lodged with the local authority.

#### **10.2 The Ballot**

- Ballot papers will be posted to the eligible person responsible for casting a vote within their business 42 days before the day ballot. In the case of national companies, the responsibility for voting may lie with head office.
- Prior to or on the date the ballot papers are issued the BID Proposer will provide to all those eligible to vote in the ballot, with a copy of the BID Business Plan.
- The BID ballot is a confidential postal ballot conducted by Aberdeen City Council on behalf of Aberdeen BID and in accordance with Scottish BID legislation.
- Where an eligible property is vacant the voting papers will be sent to the property owner.
- In Aberdeen BID's case, voting papers will be issued no later than 11/02/2021.
- The last date for all ballot papers to be returned is 5pm on 25/03/2021. Papers received after this date and time will be deemed null and void.
- 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.
- Of those that vote, over 50% by number of ballots and 50% by combined rateable value must vote in favour of the BID.
- All eligible persons (i.e. those persons liable to pay non-domestic rates) will have one vote or 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.

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- The ballot papers will be counted on 26/03/2021 and the results announced by the Aberdeen City Council within one week.
- Following a successful ballot, the BID will commence on 01/04/2021 and will run for a period of five years until the 31/03/2026.

### 10.3 BID Ballot Timetable

Item	B-n	Procedure	Time	Date	Comments
1	B-154	Last day for notice of intention to put BID proposals to ballot.	<b>Regulation 4</b> At least 154 days before ballot	22/10/2020	
2	B-126	BID Review	BID project should be reviewed, and agreement reached as to whether a positive ballot is achievable or not. If a positive ballot is not achievable, then the BID should not go to ballot.	19/11/2020	
3	B-98	Last day for the submission of the BID proposal to the local authority and Scottish Ministers.	<b>Regulation 5 (2) (a) (i)</b> At least 98 days* before the day of the ballot in accordance with regulation 4.  *This would give the local authority at least 28 days to consider proposals before deciding whether or not to exercise veto.	17/12/2020	
4	B- 70	Local authority to confirm that it is or is not vetoing the BID proposals.	<b>Regulation 14 (1)</b> For the purposes of section 42(2) of the 2006 Act, the prescribed period is 70 days prior to the day of the ballot.	14/01/2021	
5	B-56	98 days after item 1 the BID Proposer requests local authority to instruct ballot holder to hold ballot.	<b>Regulation 5 (2) (a) (ii) and (b)</b> The request to hold a ballot should be at least 56 days* before the ballot date. *To allow time to put in place ballot arrangements, before issuing ballot papers (at least 42 days before ballot), it is recommended that the request to hold a ballot should be made at least 56 days before the ballot date.	28/01/2021	
6	B-56	The local authority instructs the ballot	<b>Regulation 6</b>	28/01/2021	

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	B-42	holder to hold BID ballot.  Ballot holder puts in place arrangements to hold BID ballot.	<b>Regulation 8</b>	11/02/2021	
7	B-42	Issue of ballot papers.  Spoilt ballot papers.  Publication of notice of ballot (by ballot holder).	<b>Schedule 2, para. 3</b> 42 days before ballot date.  <b>Schedule 2, para. 11</b> Spoilt ballot papers may be replaced at any time from the issue of ballot papers.  <b>Schedule 2, paras. 2(c) and 3</b> - at least 42 days after but no more than 90 days after, the date on which the ballot holder published the notice required by paragraph 3(a).	11/02/2021  11/02/2021	
8	B-42	Last day for postponing the day of the ballot by up to 15 days.	<b>Schedule 2, para. 2 (2)</b> - No later than 42 days before the day of the ballot, the ballot holder may postpone the day of the ballot by up to 15 working days.	11/02/2021	
9	B-10	Last day for the appointment of a proxy.	<b>Schedule 2, para. 5(5)</b> An application to appoint a proxy shall be refused for the purposes of a particular ballot if the ballot holder receives it after 5 p.m. on the tenth day before the day of the ballot.	15/03/2021	
10	B-7	First day for the request for issue of replacement of LOST ballot paper.	<b>Schedule 2, para. 12</b> Where a voter has not received their ballot paper by the seventh working day before the day of the ballot, that voter may apply (whether or not in person) to the ballot holder for a replacement ballot paper.	18/03/2021	
11	B-5	LAST day for cancellation of proxy	<b>Schedule 2, para. 5 (10)</b> A notice under subparagraph (9) by a person entitled to vote cancelling a proxy's appointment shall be disregarded for the purposes of a ballot if the ballot holder receives it after 5 p.m. on the	20/03/2021	BY 5PM

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			fifth day before the date of the poll at that election.		
12	B	Ballot Day	<b>Schedule 2, para. 2</b> At least 42 days after but no more than 90 days after, the date on which the ballot holder published the notice required by paragraph 3(a). (See Item 7).	25/03/2021	By 5pm
13	B+1	The Count	<b>Schedule 2, paras. 14-16</b> As soon as practicable after the day of the ballot, the ballot holder shall make arrangements for counting the votes cast on such of the ballot papers as have been duly returned (in accordance with paragraph 13) and record the number counted.	26/03/2021	
14	B+1  B+8	Declaration of results	<b>Schedule 2, Para 17</b> (2) The ballot holder, having made the certification under subparagraph (1) Shall:  (a) forthwith make a declaration of the matters so certified; and  (b) Give public notice of the matters so certified as soon as practicable and within 7 days after the counting of the votes.	By:26/03/2021	

### 11.0 Public Sector BID Involvement

#### 11.1 Baseline Services

A baseline service agreement ensures the BID does not use the levy money to duplicate any services provided by Aberdeen City Council and Police Scotland. The services directly delivered by the BID must be additional to any statutory services. The baseline services agreement gives an assurance to businesses that the levy payment will only be used for **additional** projects. Additionally, a baseline agreement avoids the risk that public agencies including Aberdeen City Council will not reduce its statutory level of service to the BID area following a successful ballot.

For a full and detailed list of services provided in the BID area by Aberdeen City Council, please see Appendix 6a.

For a full and detailed list of services provided in the BID area by Police Scotland, please see Appendix 6b.

### 12.0 Measuring Success



## Business Proposal

### 12.1 Measuring the Success of the BID

Throughout the lifetime of the BID, all work on the BID projects will be monitored and evaluated to ensure the projects proposed in the BID Business Plan achieve a high level of impact and are progressing 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.

The BID will undergo an independent evaluation and or Assessment and Accreditation Interim Review (AAIR) of its activities at the halfway point and towards the end of the third term.

The AAIR: -

- is a bespoke review, which recognises and accords with the Scottish BIDs legislation and the public and private sector environment in Scotland
- gives confidence to businesses and the Board of Directors that the practices of the BID Company are robust and accord with good practice and
- supplies an audit trail to support any future evaluation of the BID Company.
- In developing the Interim Review, a consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders and organisations and of course our levy payers.

We reviewed existing assessment and accreditation frameworks, including existing documents used to assess BID Proposals in the UK, to identify key lessons.

The AAIR is recommended by Scotland's Improvement Districts (SIDs) as good practice and is included as one of the good practice elements of any Scottish BID Proposal and BID Business Plan.

### 12.2 Marketing, Communications and Social Media

To ensure openness and transparency in the management of the BID company, following a successful ballot, the BID Board has agreed the BID Business Plan should include, but not limited to: - one to one business engagement, business briefings, social media engagement, newsletters for those businesses (preferring hard copy information or with no access to IT), press releases, business forums, business networking meetings etc.

Additionally, the following information is to be displayed on the Aberdeen BID website: -

- The current BID business plan.
- Monthly BID bulletin reports.
- The BID ballot result.
- The contact details for the BID CEO and other staff members.
- The names of BID Board members and either the name of their business or the sector they represent.

## Business Proposal

- Details of director Meetings the agenda and minutes - abridged where necessary
- The methods levy payers can provide feedback to the BID e.g. AGM and/or other business networks and other meetings.
- An annual report detailing the BIDs the projects/services/initiatives delivered and the cost of each; and the Aberdeen BID's achievements and the value the BID provides to levy papers

### 13.0 Finances

#### 13.1 Estimated Income and Expenditure

It is calculated that there are circa 802 eligible properties located within the BID area (this figure may change as businesses move, expand or close). The BID levy income is calculated to be approximately £980,000 per annum.

The average BID levy collection rate for Aberdeen Inspired is 98%. Therefore, an amount has been set aside in the budget under 'contingency' to allow for any bad debt."

The BID will endeavour to secure voluntary contributions from ~~business~~ property owners outwith the BID area, owners of ~~properties businesses~~ who fall below the current threshold, as well as other external funding partners where possible, thus increasing the amount available to spend on projects as they develop.

As the BID progresses, more income will be attracted, and this will be invested in improving the town centre for the benefit of the businesses and local community.

#### 13.2 Financial Management Arrangements

Any variations within budgets will be reported to the Board of Directors.

The Board will agree on an annual basis how funds for subsequent years will be allocated. This will be based on business feedback during the previous year and the priorities for the coming year, which allows the BID the flexibility to respond to changing business needs and requirements.

Aberdeen City Council will collect the levy payments on behalf of the BID and will retain these funds in a separate account until the BID Board calls these funds down. The BID Board will manage the levy funds that are collected by the Council. This arrangement will ensure that projects are delivered, and any financial liabilities of the BID are transparent.

#### 13.3 Aberdeen BID Projected Income and Expenditure

See Section 8.1 for details.

### 14.0 Contact Information

If you would like more information please visit our website [www.anybid.com](http://www.anybid.com) or contact Chair or BID Renewal Manager by telephone, e-mail or make an appointment to see them.

BID Renewal Manager

T: 01224 642751

## Business Proposal

E: [innes.walker@aberdeeninspired.com](mailto:innes.walker@aberdeeninspired.com)

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### APPENDICES

- APPENDIX 1 - Support for the BID
- APPENDIX 2 - Details of Consultation
- APPENDIX 3 - BID Business Plan
- APPENDIX 4 - Database
- APPENDIX 5 - Instruction to Hold a Ballot (copy letter)
- APPENDIX 6 - Baseline Services
- APPENDIX 7 - Business Consultation Summary
- APPENDIX 8 - Steering Group Agreement
- APPENDIX 9 - Copy of Aberdeen City Council Ballot Funding Letter
- APPENDIX 10 - Renewal Steering Group Minutes
- APPENDIX 11 - Common Operating Agreement

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