

**BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (SCOTLAND) STEERING GROUP  
VICTORIA QUAY, EDINBURGH – 22 JUNE 2006**

**Present:**

**David Henderson**, Scottish Executive Finance & Central Services Department (Chair)  
**Ken Bruce**, Royal Bank of Scotland  
**Garry Clark**, Scottish Chambers of Commerce (SCC)  
**David Davidson**, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)  
**Sarah Fortune**, COSLA  
**Joan Hewton** (Scottish Assessors Association)  
**Andy McCann**, Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)  
**Ken Jobling**, Scottish Executive Development Department  
**Ian Davison Porter**, Scottish Executive, Project Director, BIDs Scotland  
**Lucile Rankin**, Scottish Executive, Principal Estates Surveyor

**Secretariat:**

**Billy McKenzie**, Scottish Executive Finance & Central Services Department  
**Georgie Duncan**, Scottish Executive Finance & Central Services Department  
**Anne Thomson**, Scottish Executive Finance & Central Services Department

**Welcome and introductions**

1. Apologies had been received from Jane Wood (Boots PLC), Charlie Shanlin (City of Edinburgh Council), Jacqui Reilly (Association of Town Centre Management), Fiona Moriarty (Scottish Retail Consortium), Vicki Lewis (COSLA), Katherine Light (Land Securities) and Euan Dobson (Scottish Enterprise).

**Items 2 and 3: Minutes of last meeting and matters arising**

2. The minutes of last meeting were agreed. There were no matter rising not covered in the remainder of the agenda.

**Item 4: BIDs progress report**

3. David Henderson explained the progress that had been made since the earlier meeting – with all 6 Pilots BIDs now operational and the Project Director appointed. Ian Davison Porter then introduced his first progress report. The following issues were discussed.

3.1 Copies of the new national BIDs logo were circulated. This will be used as an overarching logo, with each pilot BIDs logo detailed underneath as appropriate.

3.2 Due to excessive tender costs, the BIDs website project is being re-tendered. Once in place, this will include links to a range of relevant websites (including the UK BIDs website). The Scottish Executive website already has a BIDS news page.

3.3 Marketing and communications will be key to the delivery of a successful BID. The Project Director and the pilot team (with some external assistance) are

working on developing a Marketing and Communications Action Plan with a view to having this in place by the Autumn.

3.4 All the pilots, bar possibly Glasgow, are broadly on track to ballot in 2007 although the Project Director noted some concerns about timetables. Edinburgh and Glasgow may have the greatest challenge due to the size of the BID areas in each city. As a result, the Glasgow ballot date could slip into 2008. Alternatively, the BID areas in Edinburgh and Glasgow could be phased given the number of businesses involved. Existing good practice suggests that a manageable number of businesses within an initial BID area is around 650.

3.5 Of the 6 pilots, 5 intend to appoint a project manager. The Clackmannanshire BID intends to establish a separate BID company.

3.6 Steps are being taken to minimise costs across the pilots by centralising administration wherever possible (for example, marketing, communications, benchmarking, and the website). The Project Director will report on this to future meetings of the Steering Group.

3.7 It was agreed that Project Director's future quarterly reports would provide an overview, with separate Annexes on the progress with each BID pilot.

3.8 There was a discussion on the costs involved if ballots were delayed. One view was that businesses could lose interest if the ballot was delayed for too long. It was also suggested that the larger BID areas might need extra resources because of their size although, given that the decision on whether to progress the BID should be for businesses alone, an indication of the strength of business support might be gauged by whether businesses themselves would be prepared to put up some of the resources needed. (In that context, it was noted that any new BID project would have to get going without any support from the Executive.) David Henderson noted that some funding was being held in reserve for 2006-07 and could be used to support individual projects where that was considered appropriate. He suggested the Steering Group return to the issue at a future meeting once more information was available.

3.9 Following publicity around the announcement of the successful pilots, there had been enquiries from some of the unsuccessful applicants seeking feedback and also a few enquiries from areas which had not submitted applications asking about BID status. The unsuccessful applicants had all received feedback and, as a general point, all replies had made clear that information on BIDs and the BID process would be shared widely and that the Project Director would be happy to meet those with an interest in establishing BIDs. As yet, none of the responses had been followed up.

3.10 It was noted that the BIDs legislation was on track. The relevant Bill being taken through the Scottish Parliament was expected to receive Royal Assent by Christmas. The UK provisions would follow.

3.11 Given that BID projects take at least 18 months to get to ballot, it was asked whether there were any plans to have a second round of projects – given that otherwise there would be a gap between the pilots and any subsequent projects. In the Executive's view, it would be for businesses themselves to decide whether to continue

the central BID support function established for the pilots. The Executive currently had no plans to provide direct financial support for a second round of projects.

3.12 A concern raised by businesses is that they could end up paying through the BID levy for councils to reinstate services that had been cut. While the legislation is intended to give protection against this, the Project Director said that the baseline work being taken forward should allow this to be monitored.

3.13 The Project Director noted that one BID pilot had investigated whether linking purchasing across all the businesses in the BID could reduce power bills.

#### **Item 5: BIDS consultation paper**

4. It was agreed that the group would respond in writing to this consultation. It was noted that the consultation paper was based on the equivalent English position (which is already in place) but included a number of proposals that were more business-friendly.

#### **Any Other Business**

5. Two items were raised.

5.1 The first was around the impact of the Review of Local Government Finance (chaired by Sir Peter Burt). The Committee had indicated it would report by end October 2006. Thereafter, Ministers would need time to assess the Committee's recommendations. In advance of this report, it would be premature to speculate on what might emerge. However, on a related matter, the Executive had made clear that it would be prepared to consider proposals from local government to enable councils which grew their business base to retain some of that income directly, outwith the local government finance settlement process.

5.2 The second was around the contribution and role of the Steering Group. David Henderson said that the Group was intended to provide expert advice. Following each Group meeting, he also reported progress to Ministers, taking account of the Group's views. The general view of Group members was that the BIDs policy had so far been taken forward positively and sensibly. Businesses were being encouraged and supported to consider BIDs but were not being obliged to set them up. That was a decision for businesses alone. If in the event they decided against, having considered all the issues, that would still be a reasonable outcome.

#### **Date of next meeting**

6. It was agreed that the Project Director would issue his next quarterly report in September but that any issues at that time would be dealt with in correspondence. The next meeting of the Group would therefore be on 14 December 2006, at which representatives from all 6 BID pilots would be invited along to give a brief presentation. **[NB: It was subsequently proposed bringing this forward by 2 weeks. In that case the next meeting will be from 10.30 to 14.00 on 30 November 2006 in Victoria Quay.]**

June 2006

Scottish Executive