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East Dunbartonshire Council

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**PLACE NEIGHBOURHOOD &
CORPORATE ASSETS
COMMITTEE**

THURSDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2023

REFERENCE:

PNCA/093/23/DG

LEAD OFFICER:

DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CONTACT OFFICER:

**DAVID GEAR, PLACE AND BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, 07917650688**

SUBJECT TITLE:

**MILNGAVIE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT**

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this Report is to update Elected Members on the Milngavie Business Improvement District (the Milngavie BID) project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Place Neighbourhood & Corporate Assets Committee:

- 2.1** approves the Milngavie BID Business Plan (**Appendix 1**);
- 2.2** delegates authority to the Executive Officer for Land Planning & Development to agree any required subsequent changes to the proposal documentation with the BID following on from this Committee approval, subject to any change being minor in nature and not substantially altering the content of the proposal documentation;
- 2.3** agrees that subject to the outcome of the ballot, the Council will provide a £180,000 voluntary financial contribution for the 5 year period to the Milngavie BID project, the structure of payments for which will be set out and agreed within the Operating Agreement;
- 2.4** agrees the Executive Officer for Land Planning & Development utilises existing budgets and funding to provide this financial support;
- 2.5** subject to the outcome of the ballot, delegates authority to the Chief Solicitor & Monitoring Officer to negotiate and agree the required Operating Agreement with Milngavie BID; and
- 2.6** notes that the outcome of the ballot will be provided in a Technical Note to Elected Members.

ANN DAVIE

DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

3.0 BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1** A report was presented to Council in June 2023 (Report Ref: PNCA/057/23/DG) in which it provided an update on work to take the Milngavie BID to a re-ballot and the emerging Kirkintilloch BID to a ballot. The Kirkintilloch BID ballot closed on 2nd November, and the Milngavie re-ballot will take place in November/December, with the result being declared in January 2024.
- 3.2** The Milngavie BID aims to build on previous project successes and continue promoting the town centre as an attractive and welcoming place, where people of all ages choose to visit and spend time in shops, or services and where businesses will decide to locate and grow. Milngavie BID is becoming an established and recognised way for local businesses to work together with other public and private sector partners to improve local economies and, by extension, local communities in a variety of contexts. Milngavie BID wishes to continue working productively with community and volunteer groups and extend this over the next BID term.
- 3.3** The Milngavie BID Board has prepared and presented a Business Plan (**Appendix 1**), which requires approval from the local authority prior to moving into the ballot stage. If approved, the Milngavie BID ballot will be thereafter closing in January 2024. It is expected the results of the ballot will be ready towards the end of January/early February 2024.
- 3.4** Should the ballot receive a positive result, the existing BID company will manage and deliver a five-business plan. The board of directors will be elected and is open to businesses within the BID area. The Council will as per previous terms be offered a director role, which to-date has been an Elected Member. In-turn, a chairperson will be nominated from the board of directors. Directorships of the company will not be remunerated.
- 3.5** The Council currently has one Elected Member Director on the Milngavie BID Board of Directors in recognition of the Council's role as a key partner in the project. Officers from the Place & Business Development service also attend Board meetings in a supporting capacity.
- 3.6** Should the ballot receive a negative result, the Milngavie BID Board will need to consider whether it attempts another ballot in the future. Should this situation arise, further advice would be provided by Scottish Towns Partnership to help inform detailed options and the next best course of action, which would form the subject of a Technical Note.

Business Plan (2024-2029)

- 3.7** The draft Business Plan has been submitted to the Council and Scottish Government. The submission of the Business Plan at this stage ahead of the ballot is a requirement falling from the national BID legislation. The proposed Business Plan for 2024-2029 is attached as **Appendix 1**, which outlines the key themes and projects to be delivered should the Milngavie BID project be successful at ballot.
- 3.8** These have been developed considering the local town centre strategy and the results of consultation over 2023 with businesses within the geographic proposed

Milngavie BID area (a plan for which is contained within the Business Plan 2024-2029). Consultation has included: door to door visits; one to one meetings with businesses; and online and paper surveys.

3.9 Scottish BID legislation allows 28 days for the local authority to agree the Business Plan which enables the ballot to take place. The legislation also permits local authorities to veto a draft business plan proposal and in turn the ballot. The Council has until midnight 9th November 2023 to accept or veto the draft Business Plan proposal.

3.10 The draft Business Plan has identified a number of priority areas, which the Milngavie BID would deliver on. From a review of the Business Plan, Officers foresee the following types of benefits to be enabled through this proposal in Milngavie town centre.

- Enhance Milngavie Town Centre as the heart of the town;
- Maintaining and improving town centre greenspaces;
- Ongoing property maintenance schemes such as bespoke hanging swing signs for town centre businesses;
- Town centre dressing with promotional banners and planter wraps;
- Looking after the West Highland Way themed town centre redevelopments delivered by the BID;
- Additional CCTV camera installation and maintenance to supplement the planned EDC upgrades;
- Continue to make the town centre a destination for events, and continuing to grow the local events calendar to give the town a unique selling point;
- Continue to develop the marketing, branding and promotional assets such as Milngavie.co.uk and the social media platforms will be continually updated with ongoing content; targeted marketing messages; event promotions; and individual business promotions.
- Advertising in the Community Magazine; Park Life; Leaflet Print & Distribution
- Digital support and training for businesses. Helping businesses to improve their skills to complement their retail businesses and building on the well-received training programmes which trained over 50 people in Food Hygiene, Personal Licence, Emergency First Aid at Work and social media.
- Help find efficiencies for town centre business operating costs;
- Act as a collective voice to local business;
- Encourage partnership working with other local business locations, local community organisations and groups, and the public sector organisations.
- Encourage and promote participation on key town centre investments with local public sector organisations, including the Council; and
- Establish the Milngavie BID as a long-term town centre organisation to deliver town centre improvements and local economic growth.

3.11 Successful BIDs provide a major opportunity to deliver business led improvements for the long-term health of a town centre. They can provide significant added value to the town centre through the ability to draw additional funding via levy payments. Therefore, any Council contribution can be viewed as leverage to secure the additional investment and support for both local and strategic outcomes in relation to growing the local economy.

- 3.12** The draft Business Plan covers a range of activity, and in doing so shows an alignment with many of the objectives of the approved town centre strategy for Milngavie, and the approved local Economic Recovery Plan.
- 3.13** Levy payment income creates the majority of the overall budget for a BID, and these levy charges are set using Rateable Values of a business. The Milngavie BID proposes it can generate up to generate £75,000 in private sector funding per annum from levy collection (£375,000 over the 5 years).
- 3.14** Report ref PNCA/057/23/DG approved in principle financial support to the BID, subject to agreement of the Business Plan. From review of the Business Plan proposal's income and costs, it is recommended the Council provides a voluntary contribution of £180,000 for the 5-year term, should the ballot be successful. A mix of existing internal and externally funded budget lines will be utilised to provide this support. The structure of the draw down of this contribution by the BID will be agreed through the Operating Agreement, which must be put in place following a successful ballot.
- 3.15** The Council financial contribution will greatly support the project and assist with the management and running costs. In addition, the Council expects to provide support in-kind through officer and Council representatives on the Board of Directors.

Operating Agreement (2024-2029)

- 3.16** Should there be a positive outcome at the ballot, as per BID legislation, the BID company and the local authority are required to agree an Operating Agreement document. In summary, the Operating Agreement outlines the following: the key principals and protocols for managing levy collections; the agreed level of any voluntary Council contribution to the project; and outlines Council baseline services within the town centre.
- 3.17** The levy collection process is normally managed by the relevant local authority in conjunction with the collection of Non-Domestic Rates. The Council has, for an agreed annual fee, provided these services to the Milngavie BID and it is proposed this arrangement would apply to this BID and be outlined in the Operating Agreement.
- 3.18** The profile of statutory and discretionary baseline services provided by the Council in the town centre, is compiled in consultation with the appropriate Council services. In the event of a successful ballot, the Chief Solicitor & Monitoring Officer will negotiate the terms of the Operating Agreement with Milngavie BID company and thereafter enter into the agreement on behalf of the Council. The Chief Solicitor & Monitoring Officer or Legal Manager will sign the agreement on behalf of the Council.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

The implications for the Council are as undernoted.

- 4.1** Frontline Service to Customers – n/a
- 4.2** Workforce (including any significant resource implications) – n/a

- 4.3** Legal Implications – no legal implications.
- 4.4** Financial Implications – the Finance Service will collect the levy on behalf of the Milngavie BID for an estimated minimum fee of £5,000. The exact figure and details of this arrangement post successful ballots will be set out in Operating Agreement. Any property owned by the Council within the Milngavie BID area will be liable for an annual levy payment. The annual levy payment for the Council over the proposed BID term is forecast to be in the region of £15,000 but this will be dependent on whether Council owned property is leased or vacant during the BID term. Ownership levels and levy charges will require to be calculated as part of the Business Plan. The corresponding ‘Yes’ vote provided by the Council, will make an important contribution towards the BID achieving the minimum rateable value vote threshold as required by legislation.
- 4.5** Voluntary funding contribution from the Council to help deliver each BID as outlined in this Report would be funded through existing budget lines pertaining to economic development and regeneration.
- 4.6** Procurement – no implications.
- 4.7** ICT – no implications.
- 4.8** Corporate Assets – no immediate implications however the Executive Officer for Assets & Facilities will be required to vote in ballots on behalf of any Council landholdings within improvement district boundaries.
- 4.9** Equalities Implications – no immediate implications.
- 4.10** Corporate Parenting – no implications.
- 4.11** Sustainability – no implications.
- 4.12** Other – n/a

5.0 MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The risks and control measures relating to this Report are as follows:-

- 5.1** Whilst support is provided to BID projects, the management and implementation of these projects is in the gift of the Milngavie BID. Risk exists relating to failure to meet legislative timescales for the renewal ballot. To mitigate against risks each BID has allocated dedicated time and resource to make necessary preparation for a ballot and a business plan proposal. This work also includes regular consultation with relevant Officers and services to ensure all aspects of work relating to the ballot, the business plan and any Council duties are considered within this programme of work.
- 5.2** Risk exists in relation to the day-to-day management and governance of a BID, which if not undertaken properly can result in the failure to deliver on its Business Plan. It is important therefore the necessary BID Board arrangements and a suitable paid project management resource is in place.

- 5.3** Voluntary organisations such as a BID can carry a risk relating to capacity of those who dedicate time in addition to their own business commitments. Risk also exists in relation to the capacity, skills and long-term commitment to operate the Board and BID Company. Officers will continue to work with the Milngavie BID to encourage ongoing reviews and development work at a Board level to ensure the necessary skills and capacity remain in place to deliver the project over the 5-year term.
- 5.4** There is a risk that the ballot outcome is either not valid or not successful. Further promotional activity and business consultation between now and the ballot date will help to mitigate this risk. If unsuccessful, a re-ballot could be considered but this cannot take place until at least a full year elapses and would require further funding to be sourced for project management and campaigning. Any proposal and process for a re-ballot would be outlined in an update via a Technical Note to Elected Members.

6.0 IMPACT

- 6.1 ECONOMIC GROWTH & RECOVERY** - Supporting BIDs shows a commitment to working with town centre businesses to support local economic growth in these areas and delivery against the local economic recovery plan and town centre specific strategies.
- 6.2 EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS** - The health of town centres will be important in generating local employment opportunities.
- 6.3 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE** - The health of town centres will be important to ensure they are places which are welcoming and feel safe. Improvement district projects can successfully complement the existing work of the Council and Community Planning Partners in relation to the environment and security.
- 6.4 SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES** - The delivery of projects will support local people in a number of ways to help delivery stronger communities.
- 6.5 ADULT HEALTH & WELLBEING** - Some projects delivered through BIDs help create better environments and more social spaces and opportunities will support well-being.
- 6.6 OLDER ADULTS, VULNERABLE PEOPLE & CARERS** - Some projects delivered through BIDs will help create better environments and more social spaces and opportunities for older adults and vulnerable people.
- 6.7 CLIMATE CHANGE** - increasing the viability and vitality of town centres help increase more local activity in relation to trade, leisure and social activity. In doing so this can help create more sustainable patterns of travel and strengthen local economies.
- 6.8 STATUTORY DUTY** - The implementation of BIDs supports a range of national planning, economic development and regeneration objectives, as well as delivers on local strategy in relation to economic development and town centres. Improvement districts are not led or run by local authorities. The ownership and empowerment of these models inform change in town centres which aligns with the ethos of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

7.0 POLICY CHECKLIST

7.1 This Report has been assessed against the Policy Development Checklist and has been classified as being an operational report and not a new policy or change to an existing policy document.

8.0 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1 - Milngavie Town Centre BID Business Plan.