

**To: Leadership Board**

**On: 19 June 2024**

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**Report by: Chief Executive**

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**Heading: Paisley First Renewal Ballot**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 Paisley First was registered as the Business Improvement District for Paisley Town Centre in January 2015 following the outcome of a successful ballot of town centre businesses on 13 November 2014.
- 1.2 BIDs have a legislative basis under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2006. After operating for a 5-year term, another successful ballot must take place for the BID to continue operating. Under the legislation, it is for the Local Authority to conduct the ballot on behalf of the BID. The Local Authority also has a power of veto in certain circumstances which are outlined in the Act. The ballot may only be held if it is demonstrated that at least 5% of those eligible to vote are in support of the renewal ballot being held.
- 1.3 Paisley First have written to the Chief Executive confirming their intention to issue a formal request to the Council to put the BID proposals to ballot.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Renfrewshire Council confirms that it supports the conduct of the ballot in respect renewal of Paisley First Business Improvement District subject to approval of the BID proposals.
- 2.2 That the Board notes that the Bid proposals must be submitted to the Council and the Scottish government by 18 July 2024.
- 2.3 That the Chief Executive be authorised to consider the BID proposal and determine whether to veto the proposal as explained in paragraph 3.8 below and otherwise to exercise the Council's functions in relation to the BID procedure.
- 2.4 That the Board notes that a further report will be brought to the next meeting of the Leadership Board on 18 September setting out the

details of the BID Proposal and officers' recommendations on how the Council's votes in the ballot should be cast.

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### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Paisley First was registered as the Business Improvement District for Paisley Town Centre in January 2015 following the outcome of a successful ballot of town centre businesses on 13 November 2014. BIDs have a legislative basis under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2006.
- 3.2 The Paisley First Board of Directors is made up of local business owners, there are 13 positions on the board, including one position for Renfrewshire Council. This position is currently held by the Head of Economy and Development.
- 3.3 After operating for a 5-year term, another successful ballot must take place for the BID to continue operating. Under the legislation, it is for the Local Authority to conduct the ballot on behalf of the BID. The Local Authority also has a power of veto in certain circumstances which are outlined in the Act. The ballot may only be held if it is demonstrated that at least 5% of those eligible to vote are in support of the renewal ballot being held.
- 3.4 Paisley First has conducted a survey of Levy Payers and has gathered evidence of the support of more than 5% of the levy payers for the bid renewal ballot to take place.
- 3.5 Paisley First has reviewed the boundary and the levy charged as part of the preparations for the renewal ballot and has decided that there will be no change to the current boundary or to the levy.
- 3.6 Renfrewshire Council is required to commission the ballot and Civica Election Services Ltd (formerly Electoral Reform Services) has been appointed to conduct the ballot on our behalf. Ballot papers will be issued to all levy payers on 12 September with the ballot closing on 24 October 2024. The Council is also responsible to collect the bid levy, and to deliver the baseline services as set out in the operating agreement.
- 3.7 Other key milestone during the BID process are:
  - a) 20 June 2024 – draft BID proposal to be submitted by Paisley First to Scotland's Improvement Districts
  - b) 18 July 2024 – Paisley First to submit the BID proposal to Renfrewshire Council and Scottish Government
  - c) 15 August 2024 – Renfrewshire Council to confirm whether or not it is vetoing the BID proposals
  - d) 29 August 2024 – Paisley First requests the Council to instruct the ballot holder to hold the ballot
  - e) 12 September 2024 – ballot papers issued

f) 24 October 2024 - Ballot result announcement

- 3.8 The legislation governing the BID ballot process requires that the Council formally intimates to Paisley First and the Scottish Government a notice stating whether the Council are or are not vetoing the proposals. The Council can only veto the proposals on a limited number of grounds including conflict with any Council plan or conflict to any material extent with any policy contained in a document published by the Council or that it imposes a significantly disproportionate financial burden on any person or classes of persons entitled to vote during the ballot.
- 3.9 The Council will be entitled to vote in the BID ballot in respect of each of its properties within the BID area. It is proposed that the Chief Executive will cast the votes on the Council's behalf during the ballot. A further report will be brought to the next meeting of the Board setting out the BID proposals and officers' recommendations as to how the Council's votes should be cast in the ballot.
- 3.10 Paisley First will publish a Business Plan for 2025-2030 to set out the main issues and priorities that Paisley First will take forward in the next period. The business plan is currently in draft form and is available on request.

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### Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The cost of conducting the renewal ballot will be in the region of £5.5k. Paisley First have advised they will meet the cost of that ballot.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – The collection of the BID levy is the responsibility of Renfrewshire Council. Systems and arrangements for collection are already established.
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
  - Our Renfrewshire is thriving – the activities of Paisley First contribute to the animation and activity within Paisley Town Centre.
  - Our Renfrewshire is safe – Paisley First work with Renfrewshire Council and the Community Safety Partnership on initiatives such as Purple Flag accreditation which contributes to a safer night time economy.
  - Working together to improve outcomes – Paisley First work closely with the Council and partners on a range of issues and provide events and activities which are complementary to the Council's activities.
4. **Legal** – Paisley First is established as a Business Improvement District under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2006. The requirement for a renewal ballot after the 5 year term and the requirements for Renfrewshire Council as the local authority are established in the legislation.
5. **Property/Assets** – n/a

6. **Information Technology** – n/a
7. **Equality & Human Rights** -
  - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report.
8. **Health & Safety** – n/a.
9. **Procurement** – Renfrewshire Council have appointed the Electoral Reform Commission to conduct the ballot on behalf of Paisley First.
10. **Risk** – There is a risk that the ballot will fail to achieve the required level of support from levy payers.
11. **Privacy Impact** – n/a
12. **COSLA Policy Position** –n/a.
13. **Climate Risk** – n/a

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#### **List of Background Papers**

*Background Paper 1 – “Paisley First” Proposed Business Improvement District (BID) paper to Economy & Jobs Policy Board 28 January 2015.*

*Paisley First Renewal Ballot Report to Leadership Board 19 June 2019*

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