

Dear [REDACTED],

### **The Future of Tourism in Moray Speyside is in Your Hands**

I am writing to you today because later this year tourism businesses throughout Moray will be asked to vote in a ballot which will determine the future of tourism in our region.

Moray Speyside Tourism are the Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) for Moray. Since 2014, we have worked to grow the volume and value of tourism to the local economy – promoting Moray to visitors from around the world, supporting local tourism businesses and organisations and representing the region’s tourism industry at national and international level.

### **Tourism in our region is now in the best state in living memory**

The annual value of tourism to Moray has grown by more than £30 million over the past 6 years, reaching almost £130 million in 2018. Annual visitor numbers have increased by more than 100,000 with visitor spend and average occupancy also at their highest-ever levels. Tourism now employs more people in Moray than ever before.

Despite this, the future of tourism in Moray is uncertain.

Moray Speyside Tourism’s funding expires at the end of this year, leaving our region with no tourism marketing agency, our tourism businesses with no support and our tourism industry with nobody fighting its corner.

To ensure that the work undertaken by Moray Speyside Tourism since 2014 can continue, a new blueprint for tourism in the region is being proposed through the introduction of a region-wide Tourism Business Improvement District (or Tourism BID).

A Business Improvement District is an industry-led initiative that sees businesses invest in the delivery of a five-year business plan. At the end of the 5 years, there is a renewal ballot to see if businesses would like to continue for a further five years.

Eligible tourism businesses will be asked to vote on the proposal by means of a postal ballot which will run for 6 weeks from December 2019 into January 2020. If the vote is successful, a tourism business will pay an annual levy which will fund the work set out in the final Business Plan.

If the vote is unsuccessful, Moray Speyside Tourism will close and the progress we have made will cease.

Consultation with business began in November 2018 with an online survey, focus groups and several 'in-depth' interviews. Since then, we have held events and meetings throughout the region, seeking to hear the views and priorities of tourism operators and have now produced a draft business plan which outlines how we intend to deliver a brighter future for tourism in Moray Speyside.

Further consultation is needed to ensure that the final Tourism BID Business Plan addresses the right priorities for your business and to this end I enclose a copy of the Draft Business Plan and a copy of a brief survey which will help us focus the final business plan priorities in the right area.

I would be grateful if you could take some time to complete the survey (returning it in the self-addressed envelope) or, if you would prefer, complete it online at [www.morayspeyside.com/tourismbid](http://www.morayspeyside.com/tourismbid) no later than Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September.

**Your views are crucial to the creation of the Moray Speyside Tourism BID – make sure they are heard!**

The Tourism Business Improvement District can only come into being if it is voted on by you, the tourism businesses in our region.

If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch with either myself or my colleague Rhona on the number below.

Sincerely,



Laurie Piper

Operations Manager, Moray Speyside Tourism

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