

**Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee  
Business Support inquiry - Inverness  
3 December 2018**

**Bad Girl Bakery**

**Meeting hosted by: Jeni Hardie, Douglas Hardie and David Knight, Business Gateway Advisor**

**Members in attendance: Jamie Halcro-Johnson, John Mason and Gordon MacDonald**

A range of topics were discussed with Bad Girl Bakery, including:

- The bakery was established in May 2015.
- Have contracts to supply Caledonian Sleeper and the National Trust of Scotland.
- BG have been very helpful and have offered invaluable local knowledge. They listened to the specific requirement of the business and were receptive to the needs of the business.
- BG didn't try to influence the brand and ethos of the company.
- BG helped Bad Girl Bakery access soft loans through the Highland Opportunity Fund.
- At this stage the business is growing so rapidly that a business plan would be pointless.
- They are now looking to expand into a second unit in Fort William as they have reached capacity at the current site.
- They have found HIE unresponsive. This may be because the bakery is hoping to expand in a different local authority area where there is less understanding of their business. It could also be because HIE are concerned about displacement of local businesses. However, Bad Girl Bakery feel that this is because HIE don't have an understanding of their business and are inflexible in their approach, which could relate to being categorised as retail.
- The business has grown 600% in turnover in the first year in their new premises and should therefore qualify for account managed support.
- Investment in staff is seen as very important and Bad Girl Bakery support their staff to gain Craft Baker Qualifications.
- Currently employ 16 people.
- Small businesses do not have time for overly bureaucratic processes as they are running their business. They have received industry support from Scottish Bakers. They have found the banks quite supportive.