

The Highland Council

Caithness and Sutherland Area Committee - 10 February 2015

Agenda Item	9.
Report No	CS/7/15

Amendments to the Wick Traffic Management Scheme Order 1997

Report by Director of Community Services

Summary

This report invites Members to approve the Amendments to the Wick Traffic Management Scheme Order 1997.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Highland Council has a statutory obligation under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to manage the traffic on the public road network.
- 1.2 Five amendments to the Wick Traffic Management Scheme Order 1997 are required to reduce the risk of road traffic accidents and ease congestion. These amendments consist of one way road traffic orders for the following roads and are illustrated in Appendix 1:
 - Argyle Square (clockwise direction)
 - Wick Cemetery Road (south easterly then north easterly directions)
 - Ackergill Street (northerly direction)
 - Girnigoe Street (northerly direction)
 - Leith Walk (easterly then southerly directions)

2. Background

- 2.1 Argyle Square is too narrow to permit residents' parking and two way traffic flow without causing congestion.

Given the circular nature of the square, the one way road traffic order reflects the majority of traffic which travels in a clockwise direction.

The benefits of this order are:

- increases the road spaces available for traffic;
- reduces congestions;
- maintains the current residents parking; and
- eases congestion for church services.

The impacts of this order are:

- minor inconvenience to residents.

Diverted traffic will simply follow the circular road around the square. The length of diversion for vehicles is an additional 245m.

- 2.2 Wick Cemetery Road is too narrow for two way traffic flow, has a sharp turn without forward visibility and has limited visibility for traffic exiting onto the A99(T).

The one way Road Traffic Order extends from the A99(T) to the junction with Kennedy Terrace and Harrow Hill . Traffic will flow south east and then north east.

The benefits of this order are:

- eliminates the poor visibility for vehicles currently exiting onto the A99(T);
- reduces the risk of accidents at the Old Cemetery corner by preventing on-coming traffic;
- allows more road space for pedestrians and other road users; and
- reduces congestion at funerals.

The impacts of this order are:

- inconvenience to three houses; and
- funeral corteges restricted in routes to the cemetery.

The diversion route for traffic will be in a northerly direction on the A99(T) South Road then easterly on Northcote Street and southerly on Harrow Hill

The diversion length is an additional 800m for motorised traffic. Pedestrians and cyclists can use the footpath through Bignold Park and Norton Place from the A99(T) South Road to Harrow Hill, which reduces the distance to an additional 408m.

- 2.3 The one way Road Traffic Order on Ackergill Street is part of the new Noss Primary School Safer Routes To School proposals currently being developed.

This order will prevent southbound traffic existing from Ackergill Street onto Henrietta Street. The one way order extends from the junction with Henrietta Street northwards for a distance of 76m through the narrow section of Ackergill Street to its junction with Ackergill Crescent.

The benefits of this order are:

- eliminates poor visibility for vehicles existing on Henrietta St;
- reduces traffic congestion;

- allows increased road space to be given to pedestrians; and
- allows the inclusion of a two way cycle lane.

The impacts of this order are:

- inconvenience to houses on and near to Ackergill St;
- inconvenience to businesses located in the Airport Industrial Estate; and
- inconvenience to Wick John O Groats Airport;

The shortest diversion route for traffic will be from Henrietta Street to Dunnet Avenue, to Ackergill Crescent, to Ackergill Street which is an additional 506m. This shortest route runs through a housing estate with narrow roads, limited off-street parking, short straight sections of roads and sharp corners. The design and location of the school car park will encourage parents to use Hill Avenue which at an additional 675m is considered to be a quicker route to and from the school for vehicular traffic.

2.4 Girnigoe Street and Leith Walk also form part of Noss Primary School Safer Routes to Schools.

This one way order will commence at Girnigoe Street's junction with Glamis Road, then onto Leith Walk and ends at Leith Walk's junction with Glamis Road. Traffic will only be permitted in a clockwise direction.

The benefits of this order are:

- reduces traffic congestion, especially at the start and end of the school day; and
- increases road space for residential parking.

The impacts of this order are:

- inconvenience to houses on and near to Ackergill St.

The diversion route for traffic will be west along Glamis Road, north on Girnigoe Street and east and south on Leith Walk.

The length of diversion is 445m.

3. Procedure

3.1 The procedure for the traffic order complied with Community Services' Operation Procedure 415 'Permanent Road Traffic Orders':

- approved by the Area Roads & Community Manager on 21 January 2014;
- approved at the Caithness Ward Business Meeting on 27 January

2014;

- statutory consultations on 7 February 2014;
- advertised on 18 July 2014; and
- objection period from 18 July to 8 August 2014

3.2 No adverse consultations were received.

3.3 Multiple objections were received from Mr L Bush of 16 Kennedy Terrace, Wick. These are summarised as follows together with the detailed responses.

General Objections

- **The amendment to the existing order should constitute four separate orders rather than one.**
Withdrawal and re-submission of the amendment will not change the proposed one way traffic orders. Consequently there is no justification for this objection.
- **There are no exceptions for cyclists.**
Cyclists are subject to Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 along with all other road traffic. However the cyclists can travel against the flow of vehicular traffic when using the shared pedestrian – cycleway to be constructed on Ackergill Street as part of the Safer Routes to Schools project.

Objections to Wick Cemetery Road

- **The visibility when exiting on the A99(T) South Road has been exaggerated given the traffic flows.**
Traffic no longer has to exit onto the A99(T) where the visibility only achieves 6m to the north and 11m to the south. This was determined using Ordnance Survey 1:2500 landline mapping and assessed against the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 6, Section 2, Part 6, TD42/95 Geometric Design of Major/Minor Priority Junctions. This standard requires a 70m sightline for a 50kph design speed on the A99(T) without the possibility of a relaxation.
- **Diversion route of up to 1.25km instead of 450m**
The diversion route for motorised vehicles is an additional 800m along A99(T) South Road, then Northcote Street and then Harrow Hill. However cyclists can use the footpath through Bignold Park from Harrow Hill to Norton Place which reduces the additional distance to 408m.
- **Impact on equestrian traffic**
Anecdotal evidence suggests there is very little equestrian traffic currently using this road. An internet search did not show any evidence of this road forming a recognised route.

For any equestrians using this route, the proposed one way traffic order

will result in more road space to share with traffic.

- **Impact is disproportionate to existing problems**

In addition to the poor visibility for vehicles existing onto A99(T) South Road there have been several accidents at the sharp corner next to the Old Cemetery. The high wall prevents oncoming traffic from being seen. Given the above, the impacts are not considered to be disproportionate to the existing problems.

Objections to Argyle Square

- **Argyle Square road is wider than surrounding streets of similar use.**

The existing road geometry prevents two way traffic flow with residents' parking within the available road space. The majority of traffic crosses Argyle Square in a clockwise direction but anti-clockwise traffic creates congestion.

- **Demand for parking insufficient to justify impacts**

The road space available on Argyle Square is insufficient to allow residents parking and two way traffic flow. The majority of traffic already travel in a clockwise direction and this one way traffic order will prevent anti-clockwise travel which leads to congestion.

- **Diversion distance of 330m compared with 110m**

The longest diversion route around Argyle Square results in an additional 245m.

- **Increase traffic flows and higher speeds**

It is unlikely that one way traffic will result in a noticeable increase in either traffic flows or speeds as the majority of the traffic already cross the square in a clockwise direction.

- **Adjacent to an unfenced public area**

Neither traffic flows nor vehicle speeds are likely to noticeably change. The gardens remain in their original condition so the lack of fencing does not change the risk of accidents occurring.

- **Not required if road markings are improved**

Existing signage and road markings are considered satisfactory. However improved road markings and signage will not resolve the lack of space for residents' parking and two way traffic flow.

Objections to Ackergill Street

- **Diversion of about 700m compared to 95m**

The shortest diversion route for vehicles is 574m on Henrietta St – Dunnet Avenue – Ackergill Crescent compared with 76m on the Ackergill St. This is an additional 498m for traffic.

- **Diversion route through Ackergill Crescent – Dunnet Avenue – Henrietta Street designed for residential access and not through traffic and often congested by on street residents' parking.**
School traffic, presently using Ackergill St to exit onto Henrietta St, is expected to use Hill Avenue to access the purpose built car park. This car park was designed to offer a turning facility for all traffic such that the need to exit onto Henrietta St is diminished. The road geometry, horizontal alignment and on street parking will help discourage through traffic from using these roads as a diversion route.

Community Services wrote to Mr Bush on the 17 September 2014 with a detailed response to the objections raised and asked if the objection could be withdrawn. No response was received.

A follow up letter on the 4 November 2014 seeking withdrawal of the objections was issued. Mr Bush replied on 13 November 2014 suggesting the order is cancelled and only the proposed Ackergill Street one way order be applied for.

Further to legal advice Caithness & Sutherland Committee have the power to determine the amendment to the road traffic order. The amendment does not need to be referred to the Scottish Executive's Reporter's Unit for determination as the objector is not a 'service provider' with assets located within the road.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The objections do not warrant withdrawal of the traffic order amendment and separate amendments being sought.
- 4.2 The objections are not considered to justify amending or withdrawing the one way road traffic orders for Argyle Square, Wick Cemetery Road, Ackergill Street, Girnigoe Street and Leith Walk.

5. Implications

- 5.1 There are no resource implications as all proposals are within the allocated budgets.
- 5.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.3 There are no known equalities issues arising from this report.
- 5.4 There are no climate change/carbon clever implications arising from this report.
- 5.5 There are no risk implications arising from this report.
- 5.6 There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

5.7 There are no rural implications arising from this report.

6. Recommendation

Members are invited to consider and approve the amendments to The Wick Traffic Management Scheme 1997, as per the above report.

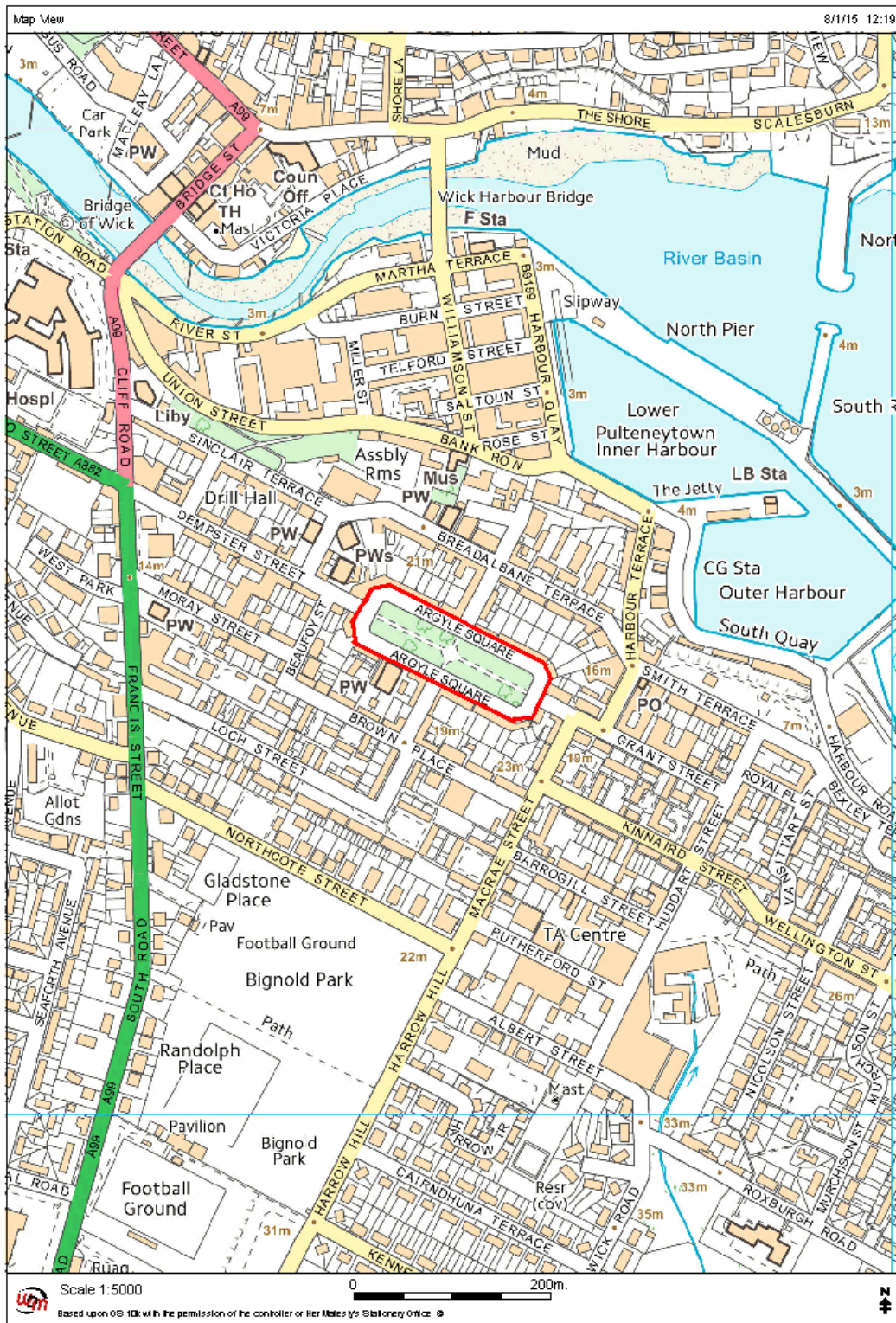
Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 26 January 2015

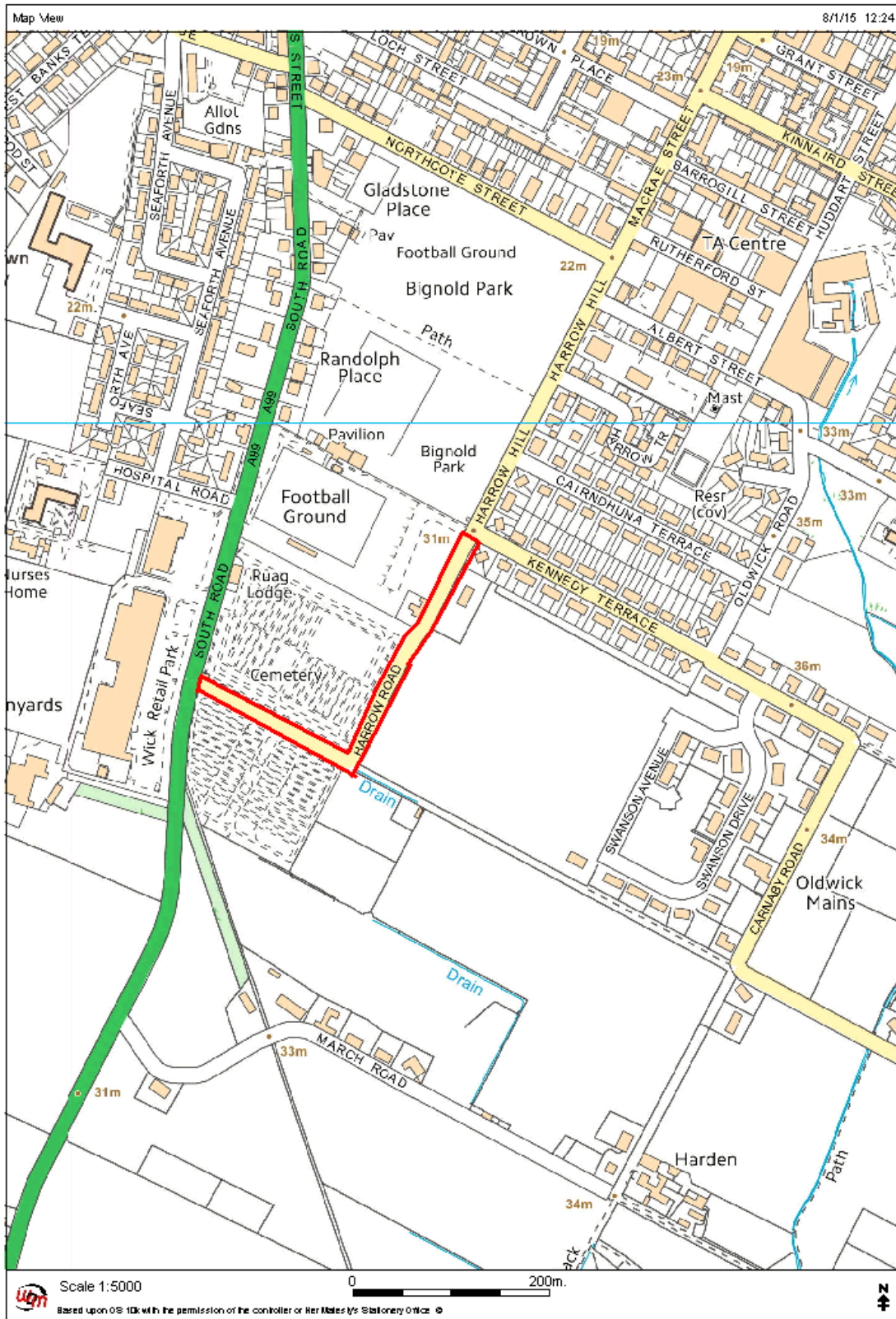
Author: Campbell Stewart, Area Community Services Manager

Appendix 1

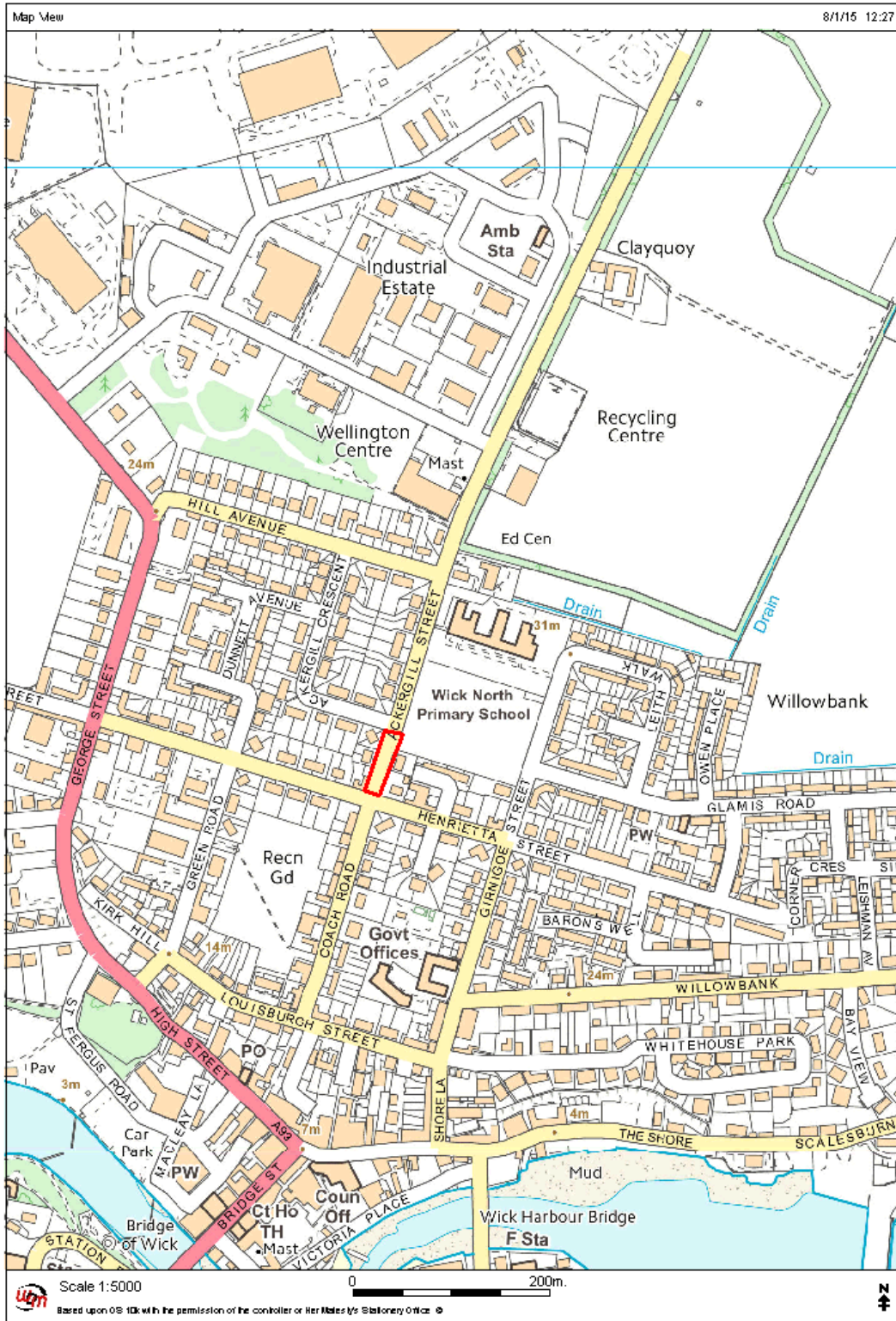
Argyle Square One Way Traffic Order (clockwise direction)



Wick Cemetery Road (south easterly then north easterly)



Ackergill Street (northerly direction)



Girnigoe Street (northerly direction) and Leith Walk (easterly then southerly directions)

