

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee

Date: 3 June 2019

Report Title: Update on Car Parking in Skye

Report By: Director of Community Services

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Significant work has been ongoing in recent years to seek solutions to managing traffic and improving infrastructure at key tourism sites across Skye. This report updates members on the introduction of charging at new on street pay and displays at the Old Man of Storr and within Lisigarry Court, Portree, for Coaches and Motorhomes (Bayfield East). The report also updates on work to provide new car parking at other key visitor sites across Skye and upgrades to existing infrastructure in order to manage the increasing growth in tourism across the Island.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are invited to:-

- Following statutory consultation, note the introduction of Traffic Orders at Old Man of Storr, Portree, Broadford (pending further review), Dunvegan, Sligachan and Kyleakin.
- Consider and discuss the update on further sites for development across Skye with the purpose of managing visitor traffic;
- Note that further engagement is required across communities regarding any proposals to charge for car parking.

3. Background

- 3.1 The growth of tourism in Skye and Raasay in recent years has been warmly welcomed and has brought significant benefits to the local community. This growth in numbers of visitors has also put pressure on key areas of infrastructure on Skye and Raasay and agencies and communities have been working together to consider how best to manage these.
- 3.2 Parking has been one area which has been challenging for both the towns and villages across Skye and Raasay and at key visitor attractions. Work has therefore been ongoing to seek different approaches to addressing these challenges; meeting visitor needs and managing traffic.

4. Traffic Orders

- 4.1 A Traffic Order was advertised in Dec 2018 including on street parking places at the Old Man of Storr and at Lisigarry Court, (Bayfield East) car park in Portree. The site at Old Man of Storr is part of a wider development of this visitor area, further details of which are outlined below. An additional 20 on street parking bays, giving a total of 60 have been created through funding from The Highland Council. This work is nearly complete and the bays are now in use which has helped to ease the traffic congestion in the area. A Traffic Order which would introduce charging for these bays was advertised in 2019. A 21 day statutory consultation then took place and as no objections were received, the Traffic Order commenced on 14th May 2019.
- 4.2 Lisigarry Court (Bayfield East) within Portree has traditionally been space for coaches. In recent years there has been a considerable increase in use of this area by camper vans which has put pressure on use in this area. Engagement with coach owners has suggested that charging in this area would be a way of managing traffic. In addition, there are locations for specific camper van parking and facilities which would also help to ease pressure in this area. A Traffic Order with the intention to regulate and charge for Lisigarry Court (Bayfield East) was published during 2019. A 21 day statutory consultation then took place and as no objections were received, the Traffic Order commenced on 14th May 2019. Officers intend installing necessary signing and ticket machines this summer.
- 4.3 A Traffic Order was advertised in Dec 2018 including on street parking places for pay and display at Ford Road, Broadford. Following a 21 day statutory consultation period in 2019 this Traffic Order has been made in part, excluding pay and display charges as this has been put on hold pending further review.
- 4.4 Members are asked to note the introduction of the On Street Traffic Orders at Old Man of Storr, Portree, Broadford (part pending further review), Dunvegan, Sligachan and Kyleakin as previously advertised and advised to members. This TRO is now enforceable and officers will be reviewing locations to ensure all required signing and lining is in place.

5. Future Developments

5.1 Work has been ongoing between agencies and communities to seek solutions at a range of other key visitor sites across Skye. This has sought local investment and external funding in order to develop key sites and provide the infrastructure needed to support these areas. The development of further sites as part of this process needs to be met from income generated from those sites. An update on specific developments are outlined below:

5.2 *Old Man of Storr*

In addition to the on street parking which has been developed at this site, further work is planned to provide additional off-street car parking of up to 64 spaces. This is due to commence shortly. Alongside this will be toilet facilities and camper van facilities. These projects have been funded by the Council, Leader and from The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. It is proposed to also charge for the additional spaces within this new development and further engagement is required with local Stakeholders to determine local views. Further work is also underway as part of the planning application for the off-street parking, to undertake a business case to develop a future phase to provide another 40-45 spaces. When complete, a total of 180-190 spaces will be available at the site

5.3 *Bayfield West*

There is currently an application to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to develop and extend Bayfield West car park. This is a project between the Council, Portree and Braes Community Trust and the Portree Tennis and Squash Club. It builds on the feedback from the car parking options appraisal undertaken in 2018 by the Council, HIE and Skye and Lochalsh Housing Association that there was a need to address the demand for car parking within Portree. The proposals also include the development of camper van parking and waste facilities. Whilst there is significant demand from visitors for use of these spaces during the visitor season, local residents also make use of these facilities. Should the application to develop the area be successful, work is required with the wider community over the coming weeks to explore how this may be taken forward, consider the impact of charging for these facilities and what arrangements can be made for local residents. At this time potential match funding from The Highland Council is solely dependent on income generated from the introduction of parking charges.

5.4 *Quiraing*

The Council and the Scottish Government Rural Payment and Inspection Directorate has jointly provided funding to develop parking facilities at Quiraing in order to address the pressure on parking from visitors to this area. This is made up of on street parking within the road boundary of up to 60 spaces, and off-street for a further 60 spaces being developed on Scottish Government land. The on street parking is now complete and will have its surface dressing finalised during the build of the off-street car park which is due to start imminently, with completion expected within two months. Further engagement is required with local Stakeholders to consider charging for these facilities.

5.5 *Neist Point*

Improvements to the access road and new parking facilities have been put in place at Neist Point to ease traffic congestion in the area. This has been funded from the Council and the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund, which has provided an additional 50 spaces. It is proposed to charge for parking in this area however further engagement is required with local Stakeholders on these proposals in the coming weeks and the publication of an On street Traffic Regulation Order amendment.

6. **Next Steps**

- 6.1 Over the coming weeks and months the Council will lead on a series of public engagement opportunities and events to include communities in the decision making process regarding any proposed introduction of parking charges.

Where parking charges are being proposed for introduction statutory consultation will also be carried out to introduce Traffic Orders.

7. **Implications**

- 7.1 Resource – A variety of funding has been utilised to develop infrastructure to date. Some investment has been from the Council and other through Leader and the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. Further funding from the Council to develop facilities needs to be met from income generated from the sites.
- 7.2 Legal – In order to enforce parking charges within any site, Traffic Regulation Orders would require to be published.
- 7.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – In the main, the sites outlined in this paper are primarily visitor destinations. However, engagement with the wider community is crucial in order to understand any potential local impact and consider arrangements for local users.
- 7.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – There has been a significant growth in tourism to Skye in recent years. The proposals within this paper attempt to manage visitor traffic and prevent damage to verges and the local landscape by providing dedicated parking facilities.
- 7.5 Risk – Income is required to support the capital investment made to develop the sites.
- 7.6 Gaelic – None.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 29 May 2019

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