

Agenda Item	<b>3</b>
Report No	<b>TC-01-21</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Tourism

**Date:** 17 March 2021

**Report Title:** Storr Car Parks/Toilets

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with a short update on progress with key visitor management facilities at the Storr in Skye, demonstrating the important role that car park improvements and charging regimes play in dealing with issues at key tourist hotspot areas including traffic management.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. note the good progress on this particular site; and
  - ii. agree that further opportunities for the delivery of new visitor management related car park improvements are moved forward at pace as part of The Highland Council's agreed process for car park charging roll-out.

### 3. Implications

#### 3.1 Resources

There are no direct resource implications from this report. However, decisions taken on infrastructure or other services arising from discussion at the Committee will require to be informed by the wider Council financial position as reported to the relevant strategic and area committees, and to Council. Charging at key tourist locations is required in order to generate the income required and enable the capital investment to improve the locations and assist in traffic management, as has been the case with Storr in Skye.

#### 3.2 Legal

All proposals for new car park visitor management improvements will follow the agreed Council and statutory processes. There are therefore no legal implications arising directly from this report.

### **3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)**

There are no community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) implications arising directly from this report. However, further consultation on the actions arising from the work of the Committee will involve communities and will require to be impact assessed as work is progressed.

### **3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever**

There are no Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications arising directly from this report, but a number of the infrastructure projects proposed through the work of the Committee, should they be undertaken, will have to be designed in such a way as to help reduce climate change impacts.

### **3.5 Risk**

There is a risk that if we do not progress and implement car parking charging in tourist hot spots as a way of traffic management, there will continue to be issues at key locations through the summer period as experienced last year.

### **3.6 Gaelic**

There are no Gaelic implications arising directly from this report. However, in keeping with agreed Council policy there would be a Gaelic element to projects subsequently undertaken as a result of being taken forward by the Committee.

## **4. Storr Car Park Skye**

4.1 The Old Man of Storr and associated path networks is a major tourist draw on the Isle of Skye and is estimated to attract some 200,000 visitors per year.

4.2 An additional roadside layby at The Storr was delivered in advance of the 2019 main tourist season at a cost of £75k. Funded by The Highland Council capital borrowing, this will be off-set by revenue generated from parking charges. A further element of off-street car parking started in 2019 and further spaces in addition to the roadside parking, bringing the capacity up to a total of 140. The costs associated with this element came from The Highland Council and LEADER.

Phase 2 of the car park has recently been completed. In addition, The Highland Council was successful in attracting funding from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund of £300k towards the provision of a new toilet block (supplemented by The Highland Council funding). Although delivery was delayed by the onset of the pandemic, the project will complete in April 2021, in time for the summer 2021 tourist season. A Camper van waste disposal site has also been included within the project. Photos are attached in Appendix 1 of the report.

4.3 Despite a reduced tourist season last year, and the ongoing work on phase 2 of the car park, visitor numbers have been very high, and the off-street car park generated an income of around £32k in the last six months of 2020, a proportion of which is used to fund the capital borrowing required for the improvements. On-street parking charges has generated a further £50k during 2020 as a whole. The development of the site has greatly helped the management of parking in the area and the damage to surrounding road verges and impact on adjoining land. It will also provide much needed camper van waste disposal facilities as part of the Highland wide network being developed by The Highland Council, community partners and the private sector.

## **5. Wider Visitor Management Car Parking projects for 2021**

- 5.1 Members will note the significant improvements at Storr, which is one example of where investment and the introduction of car park charges can contribute to effective visitor management. It is intended that a suite of further sites is taken forward over the course of 2021 with the focus on visitor management. Discussions will commence through area committees in line with the process agreed at the former Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on October 2019. Members are asked to agree with this approach, recognising the benefits to The Highland Council and local areas.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment

Date: 03 March 2021

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Appendix 1 – Photographs

