

Agenda Item	<b>8.</b>
Report No	<b>CC/22/21</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Caithness Committee

**Date:** 3 November 2021

**Report Title:** Visitor Management Car Parking & Motorhome Provision

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

### **1 Purpose/Executive Summary**

1.1 The Council approved a £1.5m Visitor Management Strategy at its meeting on 4 March 2021 in response to the increased numbers of tourists visiting the Highlands. The strategy recognised that there was a need to invest in infrastructure and council services to improve the visitor experience, and to address some of the issues arising from over-crowding in popular hotspots, including insufficient parking areas, bad/inconsiderate parking and consequential damage to roadside verges.

£250,000 from the Visitor Management Fund was allocated for improvements to parking management comprising installing charging at tourist dominated sites, improved signage, lining, minor repairs and increasing staff resources.

A cross -service working group was subsequently convened to produce a Visitor Management Plan to implement the strategy which was approved by the Tourism Committee on 21 April 2021. This included the rollout of Invitation to Pay (ITP) at agreed council off-street car parks subject to local Member approval.

This report sets out provisional locations where improvements to parking would be beneficial and Member agreement is sought on where it is proposed to implement the invitation to pay schemes, the process involved and how the sites will be managed. The report also sets out proposed changes to parking arrangements for motorhomes at the locations identified.

### **2 Recommendations**

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Agree the locations proposed and amend and add to them as appropriate and agree the immediate delivery of Invitation to Pay at the locations in Item 8.1 and charging to be voluntary at this stage; and
- ii. Agree the approach to motorhome parking at sites identified in Section 8.2 of the report.

### **3 Implications**

- 3.1 **Resource** – there is funding available through the Visitor Management Fund to implement the initial roll-out of visitor management related Invitation to Pay parking.
- 3.2 **Legal** – None as ITP is non-enforceable and falls within existing regulatory powers relating to Council off-street car parks. Terms and conditions of use can be varied at each car park without amending the Traffic Regulation Order.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** – None as charges are not enforceable and purely voluntary.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – No implications.
- 3.5 **Risk** – No implications.
- 3.6 **Gaelic** – No implications.

### **4 Visitor Management Parking and Implementation of Invitation to Pay**

- 4.1 The Council approved a £1.5m Visitor Management Strategy at its meeting on 4 March 2021 in response to the increased numbers of tourists visiting the Highlands. The strategy recognised that there was a need to invest in infrastructure and council services to improve the visitor experience, and to address some of the issues arising from over-crowding in popular hotspots, including insufficient parking areas, bad/inconsiderate parking and consequential damage to roadside verges.
- 4.2 £250,000 from the Visitor Management Fund was allocated for improvements to parking management comprising installing charging at tourist dominated sites, improved signage, lining, minor repairs and increasing staff resources.
- 4.3 A cross -service working group was subsequently convened to produce a Visitor Management Plan to implement the strategy which was approved by the Tourism Committee on 21 April 2021. This included the rollout of parking charges at agreed council off-street car parks subject to local Member approval. It is intended that a report will be brought to the next meeting of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee that will set out the overall approach to car parking and a refreshed approach to the roll-out of wider car parking charging proposals, given the impact of COVID on the roll-out plans and proposals agreed in 2019. This will also address the issue of a local area/strategic income split.
- 4.4 In order to progress the visitor management related car park improvements, it is proposed to implement invitation to pay machines in the locations set out in this report. This follows the successful roll-out of this approach in other Council areas, including in Nairn and Inverness.
- 4.5 It is proposed that communities will be informed of the proposals via Community Councils and press releases. Any current regulation of the car parks will continue as before. Ticket machines will be installed in each selected car park with signage inviting payment. The Council will fund installation of machines, signage and upgrades to lining etc.

Ongoing monitoring to be reported back to Members before any future decisions are made on formal regulation of the car parking charges, which will be informed by the strategic approach to be considered at the next Economy & Infrastructure Committee. Members should note that non-payment will not be enforced. NO VAT applies at donation sites and any future enforceable Pay & Display cannot be introduced without full Statutory Consultation.

- 4.6 Members are asked to agree the following suggested tariffs to be used on Voluntary basis (if no overnight motorhome parking):-

Charging Hours	Scale	Tariff
	Up to 2 Hrs	£1.00
Mon to Sun	Up to 4 Hrs	£2.00
8am to 8pm	Up to 12 hrs	£3.00
24 hours max stay	Up to 24 hrs	£5.00

## 5 Common Good Car Parks

- 5.1 Where car parks are owned by the Common Good Fund, there is a different approach being adopted. It is proposed that Income from Common Good sites be split 50/50 between the Common Good Fund and the Council. As with Council-owned sites, there will be no enforcement of charges until such time in the future that a full common good consultation and Traffic Regulation Order amendment are carried out if so decided.

## 6 Short Stay – Motorhome provision

- 6.1 Currently Council regulated car parks generally ban overnight stays by motorhomes. After discussion at Highland Council Tourism Committee, Members have agreed to take a pragmatic approach to additional parking provision for motorhome visitors across the Highlands. The goal is to allow motorhomes to occupy an allocated bay in specific council car parks for a maximum stay period of 24 hours.

All activities must be contained within the vehicle within the car park and a fee will be applied. Identified sites to be discussed with Members at Ward level and once agreed then promoted by the service.

### Suggested Tariffs to be used on Voluntary basis if Motorhomes allowed

Charging Hours	Motorhomes	Scale	Tariff
Mon to Sun - 24 hours 24 hours max stay	Permitted but all activities to be contained within the vehicle	Up to 2 Hrs	£1.00
		Up to 4 Hrs	£2.00
		Up to 12 hrs	£3.00
		Up to 24 hrs	£5.00
		Motorhomes Max Stay 24 hours	£10.00

## 7 Existing Base Car Park provision costs

7.1 To add context to the management of Council car parks, the following information is provided for Members' benefit:-

- Rateable Value - £100 per bay.
- Water Rates - Average £120 per year per car park.
- Average Annualised Service cost over 40-year lifespan of a car park – surfacing, lining, signage, lighting, waste & amenity costs. £53 per bay per year.
- Ticket Machines £4500 each - Running cost - £400 per year per machine.
- Manpower funded by service.
- Cash collection and Admin funded by existing service budget.

<b>40-year Lifetime Maintenance Costs as at 2018</b>	<b>Lifetime Cost Price per Bay</b>	<b>1-year Cost Price per Bay</b>
Bay Surface (5m x 2.5m per bay)	437.5	10.93
Running surface	481.25	12.03
Lining (8m per bay)	80	2
Waste (2x 80l Bins)	416	10.4
Lighting (4 Lamps)	300	7.5
Amenity (misc.)	416	10.4
	£2130.75	£53.26
Annualised Running cost		£53 per Bay

## 8 Provisional Car Park Locations

8.1 The following car parks are proposed to have an Invitation to Pay approach implemented:-

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Car Park Name</b>
CP0014	Caithness	2	Dunnet	Dunnet Head
CP0016	Caithness	2	Dunnet	Dunnet Seadrift
CP0017	Caithness	3	Wick	Noss Head
CP0035	Caithness	3	Duncansby Head	Duncansby Head
CP0018	Caithness	3	Reiss	Reiss Beach
CP0020	Caithness	3	Wick	Camps
CP0021	Caithness	3	Wick	Riverside

8.2 The following car parks are proposed to have an Invitation to Pay approach implemented for motorhome parking:-

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Car Park Name</b>
CP0014	Caithness	2	Dunnet	Dunnet Head
CP0016	Caithness	2	Dunnet	Dunnet Seadrift
CP0017	Caithness	3	Wick	Noss Head
CP0035	Caithness	3	Duncansby Head	Duncansby Head
CP0018	Caithness	3	Reiss	Reiss Beach
CP0020	Caithness	3	Wick	Camps
CP0021	Caithness	3	Wick	Riverside

8.3 Member agreement is sought to the above locations, and to the approach set out in this report.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 18 October 2021

Author: Shane Manning, Principal Traffic Officer

Background Papers: Revenue Budget [Report](#)  
Visitor Management Plan [Report](#)