

Agenda Item	<b>7.</b>
Report No	<b>SCC/21/21</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Sutherland County Committee

**Date:** 22 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.

- 2.2 Members are asked to approve the recommendations regarding Dornoch Beach traffic management in item 9.1:-
1. Regulation of the single-track road via a Traffic Regulation Order with double yellow lines preventing the obstruction of the road by parked vehicles;
  2. Designate formal passing places where appropriate;
  3. The prohibition of Motorhomes from parking at all times in the Beach Car Park which is already regulated as a Council off-street car park;
  4. Introduce Invitation to Pay in the main Beach car park; and
  5. Formalise the existing Common Good car parks adjacent to the playpark by regulating them under the Off-Street Traffic Regulation Order and introduce Invitation to pay subject to a full statutory Common Good Consultation and agreement by the Sheriff Court where required.
- 2.3 Members are asked to approve the regulation of the Dornoch Airfield Car Park within the Off-Street Traffic Regulation Order as per item 9.2

### **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 in relation to ITP which is non-enforceable and falls within existing regulatory powers relating to Council off-street car parks. Some car parks will be subject to the statutory consultation requirements of the creation of a Traffic Regulation Order and may be subject to Planning decisions.
- 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 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):-

<b>Charging Hours</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Tariff</b>
	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.

40-year Lifetime	Lifetime Cost	1-year Cost
Maintenance Costs as of 2018	Price per Bay	Price per Bay
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 Invitation to Pay

Ref	Area	Ward	Location	Car park name
CP0189	Sutherland	1	Achmelvich	Achmelvich Beach
CP0225	Sutherland	4	Golspie	Golspie Shore
CP0223	Sutherland	4	Golspie	Golspie Fountain Road
CP0190	Sutherland	1	Clachtoll	Clachtoll Beach
CP0207	Sutherland	1	Durness Village	Durness
CP0157	Sutherland	4	Dornoch	Dornoch Beach

## 8.2 Motorhome Short Stay

Ref	Area	Ward	Location	Car park name
CP0225	Sutherland	4	Golspie	Golspie Shore
CP0207	Sutherland	1	Durness Village	Durness

## 9.0 Dornoch Beach Traffic Management

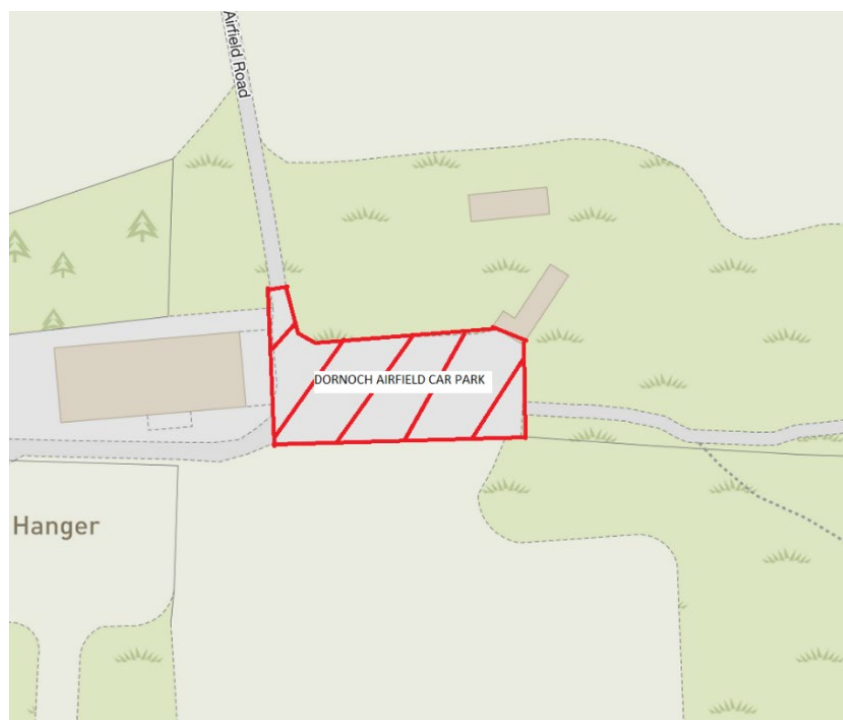
9.1 Officers have been engaging with the Dornoch Community Council since last year to improve general traffic management around Beach access activities. The outcome of this is several proposals from Dornoch Community Council (**Appendix A**).

Officers are content to support the following elements of those proposals:-

- a) Regulation of the Single-track road with double yellow lines preventing the obstruction of the road by parked vehicles.
- b) Designate formal passing places where appropriate to improve safety.
- c) The prohibition of motorhomes from parking at all times in the beach car park which is already regulated as a council off-street car park.
- d) Introduce Invitation to Pay in the main beach car park.
- e) Formalise the existing common good car parks adjacent to the playpark by regulating them under the Off-Street Traffic Regulation Order and introduce Invitation to Pay subject to a full statutory Common Good Consultation and agreement by the Sheriff Court.

## 9.2 Dornoch Airfield Car Park

This car park is currently unregulated and its use by unsuitable vehicles is difficult to control now. Considering the wider proposals for Dornoch South, it is recommended that this is corrected by regulating this existing car park within the Off-Street Traffic Regulation Order to allow its proper control of use.



Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 14 October 2021

Author: Shane Manning, Principal Traffic Officer

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

## Appendix A – Dornoch Community Council Proposals

Dornoch & District Community Council (DACC) Meeting 21 July 2021. Proposal to address car and motorhome parking at Beach.

I would like to propose that Dornoch Area Community Council recommends to Highland Council the following actions to address the out-of-control parking at the Dornoch Beach. Recent discussions with Highland Council's Shane Manning and others led me to believe that, if made, these recommendations will be favourably received.

1. Stop parking in places where we don't want vehicles to park:
  - a. **Designate the road to the beach an official single-track road and insert passing places.** This can be done immediately and should help to prevent parking on the road, although it will still not make it illegal to stop on the verge/road-edge. Double yellow lines and a Traffic Regulation Order are the only mechanism to make such parking illegal, and although this will take time, **we should immediately start the process to arrange both double yellow lines and a Traffic Regulation Order.**
  - b. **Put up signs to clarify that this is the case.**
  - c. **Put up bollards to prevent parking on Common Good Land beside the road.**
  - d. **Put up a sign at the approach to the Top Car Park at the Junction of Beach Road & Golf Road saying NO PARKING FOR CAMPERVANS/MOTORHOMES AHEAD.**
  - e. **Put up a sign at the approach to the Overflow Car Park along Beach Road saying NO PARKING FOR CAMPERVANS/MOTORHOMES AHEAD (i.e., park here).**

*None of the above is costly.*

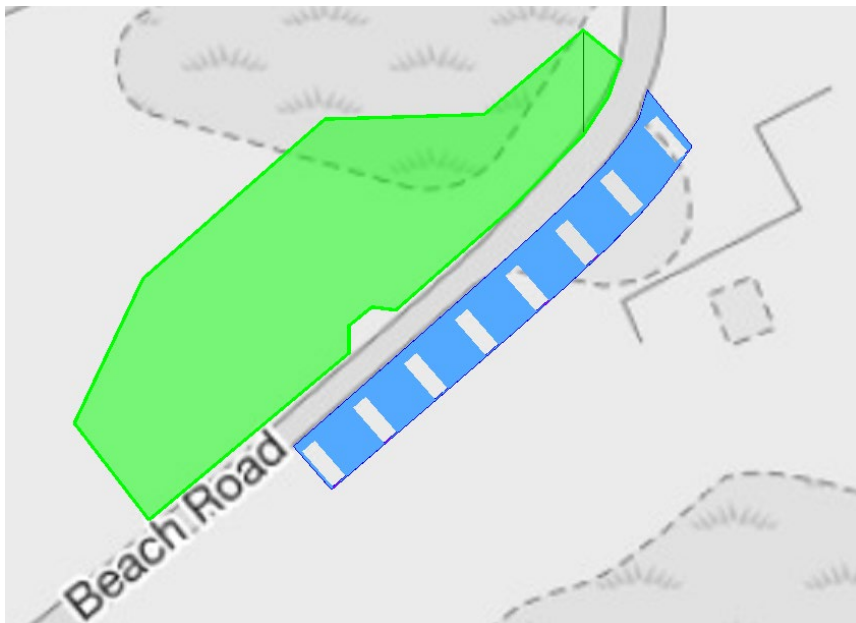
2. Clarify exactly where we want vehicles to park:
  - a. **Cars: 'Invitation to Pay' i.e., voluntary parking at all three car parks.**
  - b. **Motorhomes: Bottom two car parks only. Compulsory fee of £10 for 24 hours, but with a right to a £5 discount on Caravan site's waste facilities. (The Caravan Site has agreed this in principle).**
3. Enforcement:

**Regular enforcement of the above by a warden.**  
*This would be paid for out of the income from the ITP and from the motorhomes.*
4. Encouragement:

**It would be ideal if the warden could also encourage any motorhome to use the waste facility in the caravan site, warn them of disposing of it illegally and report/photograph anyone doing so.**

In conjunction with the introduction of 'Invitation to Pay' parking for cars at the three Dornoch Beach Car Parks, also introduce:

1. No access to the Top Car Park for campervans, motorhomes or similar large vehicles **at any time**.
2. Mandatory **daytime** paid parking for campervans, motorhomes and similar large vehicles in the Playpark & Overflow car parks (£5)
3. Mandatory **overnight** paid parking for campervans & motorhomes in clearly marked spaces (8 bays a minimum of 6m apart as shown in blue in the diagram below) in the Playpark car park (£10 per 24 hrs), but **ONLY** at times when the Caravan Park is either:
  - a. Full, or
  - b. Closed



**Items to be decided:-**

- a) Any seasonal nature to the above? (suggest 'No' for sake of simplicity).
- b) Any 'discount' scheme for overnight stays using the Caravan Park facilities? (suggest 'No' for sake of simplicity)
- c) Any limit on number of consecutive overnight stays?
- d) Advertising of available facilities at the Caravan Park?
- e) Information about nearest available facilities out of season?