

Agenda Item	7
Report No	ECI/2/20

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Economy and Infrastructure

**Date:** 6 February 2020

**Report Title:** Off-Street Car Parking Policy – Update

**Report By:** Acting Head of Policy

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 A Special Meeting of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee in October 2019 agreed a new approach to considering the introduction of car parking charges across the area. The new policy introduced improved processes for considering local charges, provided a transparent way in which to consider objections from the local community and supported a place-based approach for local areas by providing a share of the surplus income generated to spend on local priorities.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on progress towards implementation of the new policy and the engagement timeline for considering the introduction of car parking charges across the area.

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- Consider the progress made towards implementation of the off-street car parking policy agreed at EDI Committee in October 2019.

### 3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resources** – the project team has been strengthened to ensure capacity to take forward the implementation of the new approach. The resource implications of the new policy are set out in detail in section 6 of the original [Committee Report](#). The approach assumes a level of take up to support both a local share of service income and protect the current Council budget.

- 3.2 **Risk** – the share of local/service income proposed is based upon a level of take-up under the new approach. This has been designed to enable a local share of surplus income but also ensure that current service provision is maintained.
- 3.3 **Community** (Equality, Poverty, Rural, Island) – engaging with the community and providing a clear and transparent mechanism for raising objections, is a key aspect of the new policy approach. The engagement process will consider any potential equality, poverty, rural and island impacts as part of each site assessment.
- 3.4 **Legal** – the traffic order process is a statutory legal process. The new policy approach incorporates these legislative requirements into the Council’s policy approach to engagement and decision making.
- 3.5 **Climate Change** – there is an expectation that funding becoming available locally to enhance traffic management will impact positively upon Air Quality.
- 3.6 **Gaelic** - there are no implications.

#### 4. Background and Preparatory Work

- 4.1 A special meeting of the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee met on 24/10/19 to review and consider the content and recommendations of the Off-Street Car Parking Policy Review. Members agreed the following recommendations:
- The new policy for off-street car parking set out in the [Committee Report](#);
  - A two-phase roll-out to the introduction of the new policy;
  - A 50%/50% service/local share of surplus income;
  - Noted the suggestion that additional local income should be focused on spending on roads infrastructure.
- 4.2 To support the new approach, the project team resource has been strengthened. Agreed as part of the Change Fund, a Project Manager is in place, alongside a Communication & Engagement Officer. Additional business analyst support is being provided through Corporate Efficiency Team and the Principal Traffic Officer is also a member of the Project Team. Additional resource has been agreed to augment the Traffic Team to enable the Principle Traffic Officer to support the project. Recruitment for this is currently underway.
- 4.3 Between October and December, the project team have prepared for initiating the engagement process (outlined at **appendix 1**) as agreed at the Special EDI Meeting in October. Work has progressed across a number of areas:
- Project Initiation Document – outlining the scope, aims and outcomes of the project;
  - Risk Register - risk/issue and mitigations workshop held, and register developed;
  - Communications Plan – to support communicate the key messages of the project;
  - Site Inspections - internal commissioning of car park site inspections to identify and help prioritise improvement works needed – this work is nearing completion;
  - Engagement Plan - approach and timetable for full implementation during 2020/21 in place;

- Local evidence gathering - gathering local knowledge from Ward Managers/Members to input into draft proposals for charging structures and timing and car park usage. Key data includes:
  - Car park usage and frequency data
  - Identification of any site ownership/control queries
  - Key stakeholders that may be to be considered for further engagement.
- Development of draft proposals – draft proposals for each identified site which includes proposed charging structures and car park usage.

## 5. Engagement

5.1 An engagement plan has been prepared based upon the principles agreed at the Special EDI committee in October and upon the engagement process agreed (outlined at appendix 1). The policy has several key stages:

Stage 1: Pre-engagement with Members

Stage 2: Pre-engagement with Stakeholders

*Community Councils, Emergency Services, Freight Transport/Road Haulage Associations, Crown Estate, Business Improvement Districts, relevant Local Trusts/Associations, Access Panels*

The proposals will be reviewed and amended where appropriate following feedback from these statutory and key stakeholders.

Stage 3: Publication of the Traffic Order

A Traffic Order will then be created in response to the feedback collected and will be published to begin the formal objection process. The amended proposals will then be made public via the webpage ([www.highland.gov.uk/carparkconversation](http://www.highland.gov.uk/carparkconversation)) to collect feedback directly from the community.

Stage 4: Assessment of Feedback and Revised Proposals

*If there are no formal objections to the traffic order then the traffic order will be made.*

Where objections are recorded and not resolved by officers, the Traffic Order and objections will be presented at Area Committee meetings for Members' approval, amendments, or rejection.

Stage 5: Consideration of Proposals at Committee – for any unresolved objections

5.2 The focus for January has been on Member engagement, a summary of progress is outlined below:

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Initial Member Discussion</b>	<b>Public Engagement Phase</b>
Wick and East Caithness	Complete	Phase 1
Thurso and West Caithness	Scheduled 31-1-20	Phase 2
North West Sutherland	Complete	Phase 1
East Sutherland	Complete	Phase 2
Tain and Easter Ross	Complete	Phase 1
Cromarty Firth	Complete	Phase 1
Dingwall	Complete	Phase 2
Black Isle	Scheduled 3-2-20	Phase 2
Wester Ross	Scheduled 3-2-20	Phase 2
Eilean a Cho	Complete	Phase 2
Lochaber	Scheduled 17-2-20	Phase 2
Inverness	Scheduled 4-2-20	Phase 2
Badenoch and Strathspey	Complete	Phase 1
Nairn	Complete	Phase 2

5.3 Following the completion of the Member engagement phase and feedback from Members, information packs are being updated with a view to public engagement commencing the week beginning 3 February 2020. This will begin with key stakeholder engagement within certain geographic areas as set out below. Relevant Community Councils and other identified local bodies will be asked to provide comment on the draft proposals.

Areas in this first phase include:

- Wick and East Caithness
- Cromarty Firth
- North West and Central Sutherland
- Tain and Easter Ross
- Badenoch and Strathspey

5.4 Publication of the draft Traffic Order for phase 1 areas will commence in early March. All remaining wards/areas will fall within the next phase of public engagement which will commence one month later.

5.5 The aim remains that where unresolved objections are raised, for local committees to consider these in May/June 2020. This aligns with the timetable agreed at EDI and to ensure delivery of income during 2020/21.

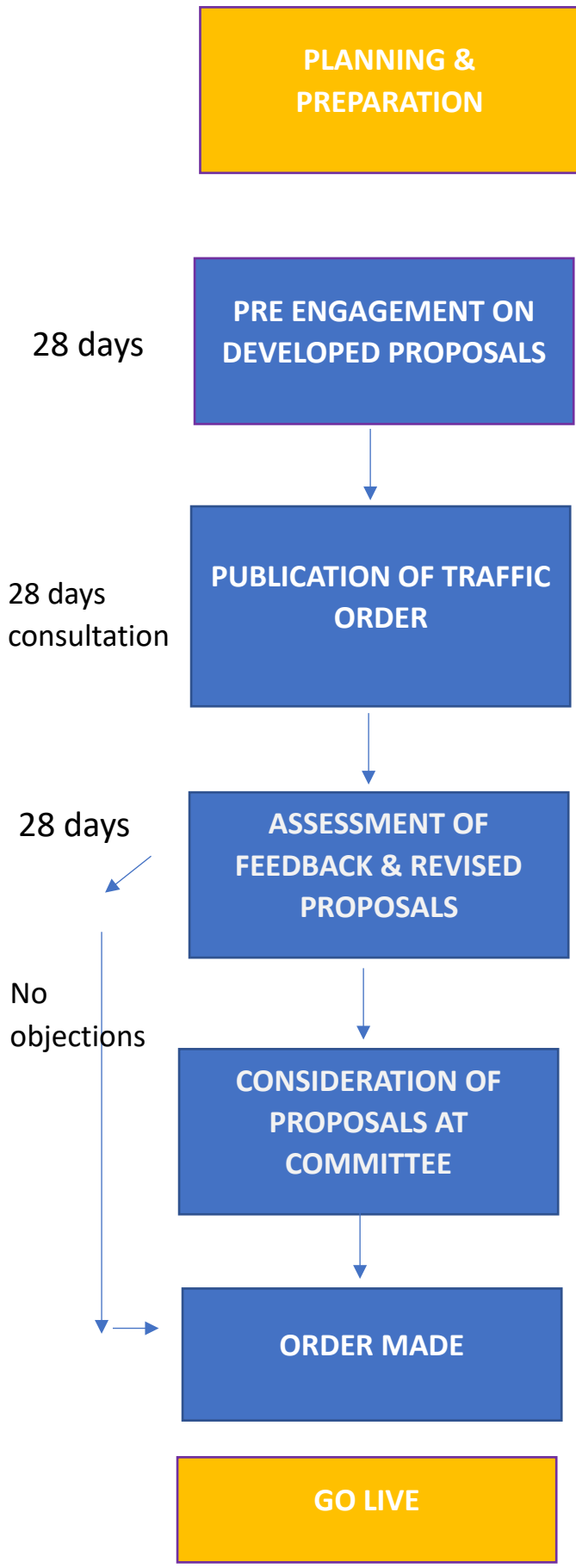
5.6 An update on progress will be presented to the next meeting of this Committee.

Designation: Acting Head of Policy

Date: 27/01/20

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**Engagement Process**



**Project Governance Documentation** – risks, project initiation document, communication plan,  
**Meetings Calendar** – identify and schedule key meetings (Ward Business Meetings, Drop-in sessions, Community Councils  
**Site Inspections** – action  
**Site Ownership/Control** – identify and engage

**Proposals** – site specific with local variation dependent upon circumstances  
**Statutory Consultees including Community Councils**  
 Pre-engagement with Community Council – 28 days

**Site Specific Engagement Plan**

- Target key stakeholders (i.e. local businesses, residents etc)
- Online survey
- Localised engagement where appropriate

**Review of feedback**

- Consideration of objections/comments
- Consideration of local impact – equality, rural social-economic
- Consideration of mitigation
- Revise/change proposals where appropriate

**Local Committee Decision (if unresolved Objections)**

- Option to approve
- Option to amend
- Option to abandon

**Implementation**

Improvement works, incl. white lining (if needed)  
 Power  
 Meter/Signage  
 Cash Collection/Enforcement organised