



Strategic Tourism Infrastructure
Development Plan
Plana Leasachaidh Bun-structair
Turasachd Ro-innleachdail

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Background

Cùl-raon

Sustainable tourism is one of Scotland's key growth sectors identified in the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy and is the Highlands' most important industry generating significant economic benefits for all areas of Highland. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism had seen a number of years of consistent growth so that by 2019 Highland's 7.5m visitors generated:

- £1.13Bn of direct spend by those visiting the area,
- a further £265m of indirect expenditure by the tourism industry purchasing local goods and services,
- over 25,000 jobs (including the self-employed).

With both lockdowns and wider travel restrictions in 2020 and 2021 overall numbers were significantly impacted but many areas of Highland and some business sectors did see a rebound in numbers during summer 2021.

However, in addition to the benefits those visitors brought, numerous challenges have become evident over the years. Some of these problems are not new, while others have been exacerbated by the circumstances brought about by the pandemic. These challenges, which negatively impact local communities as well as the visitor experience, include issues regarding:

- Roads and parking - with a high level of dependence on car transport
- Limited public transport and active travel options in many areas
- Variable or limited access to public toilet facilities. Although a large number of publicly available toilets run by the Council and / or partners are available (well over 100), the sheer size of the area still means facilities may be some distance from popular visitor sites. Some facilities are also dated and may not offer facilities that match today's expectations.
- Increased disposal of waste in public bins or littering
- Outdoor access – notably concentrations of informal / "wild" camping in some locations
- Environmental damage due to cumulative impacts of large numbers of people as well as direct damage from activities such as campfires
- Public health issues particularly around toileting or motorhome waste disposal
- Public information and varying levels of knowledge of guidance / good practice.

In an attempt to provide long-term infrastructure solutions to these challenges, the Council's Tourism Team was tasked in 2019 by its internal Tourism Working Group to produce a Tourism Infrastructure Plan. The plan consisted of an initial audit of relevant tourism infrastructure in Highland and identified some gaps in provision. It had a particular focus on publicly accessible infrastructure normally or commonly delivered by the Council, public sector partners or communities rather than facilities or services that are more commonly provided on a commercial basis by the private sector.

Due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the plan development process was marked by several pauses although a draft of the plan was circulated as part of a wider consultation exercise in November 2020. Further Covid interruptions again paused activity until summer 2021. During that time, VisitScotland's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) launched a pilot programme supporting the two national parks and local authorities in highly pressured areas to produce

Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plans. The Highland Council was successful in attracting funding to take part in the programme and agreed to combine the original infrastructure plan work with the additional elements required by RTIF to create this Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan. While capturing the situation and priorities in early February 2022, other pressures will undoubtedly arise and others will be addressed as time goes on, so the plan is expected to remain a dynamic document with periodic reviews of the contents.

The purpose of the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan is to identify key priorities for tourism infrastructure in Highland over the medium term – broadly defined as being the next two to five years. As with the 2019 Tourism Infrastructure Plan proposals, this strategy looks at publicly accessible infrastructure, either provided by the public sector or by third parties / commercial stakeholders if the infrastructure is easily made available to visitors that are not otherwise customers of the business concerned.

The perspective taken by this plan is intended to move away from the approach previously taken by RTIF, which was relatively site rather than area specific, and often resulted in funding being awarded to organisations having the capacity to take projects forward, potentially excluding some locations where needs existed but capacity to deliver a project was limited. Instead, this plan identifies a number of hotspot areas, where multiple sites experience multiple pressures across different types of infrastructure. It then goes on to propose more holistic solutions that frequently involve a package of measures that when combined are expected to address the pressures experienced at these locations more effectively than individual interventions would. Addressing the issues in the hotspot areas is anticipated to require funding of both a national (RTIF, NatureScot, etc) and local nature (Council place-based funds, Coastal Communities Fund, Town Centre Fund, etc).

The plan also identifies tourism infrastructure needs in other areas of Highland which experience pressures at individual sites but may not have the wide range of pressures seen in the hotspot areas. The plan proposes projects to address these, but it is anticipated these will be less likely to attract national funding if resources are limited so are likely to be more reliant on local funding to address them.

As it focusses on longer-term infrastructure priorities, this plan purposely excludes shorter-term projects and actions that are part of the Council's day-to-day service delivery, such as ongoing maintenance, waste management or the deployment of access rangers. These measures are picked up in the Highland Council's Visitor Management Plan 2022, which has been a parallel piece of work.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) has also received funding to produce its own Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan, therefore covering Badenoch and Strathspey and in particular the Glenmore corridor, which are located within the Highland Council area. The CNPA has indicated that the plan will correspond with the plans they have developed with partners for managing visitors in response to the COVID-19 situation. In particular, their plan *“will help identify a number of mutually reinforcing projects in specific areas at the visitor pressure points and take them to the stage where they have appropriate designs, accurate cost estimates and, as far as possible, consents in place. This process will greatly facilitate delivery of the projects as further funds become available.”* As a result, the Highland Council have been working in partnership with CNPA and is contributing to their plan. The timescale for the Cairngorms plan is different to the Highland Council one with a final plan expected in spring / early summer 2022 so this plan aims to describe some of the pressures in that area and the evidence for this but does not pre-empt the results of the CNPA's work by offering solutions at this time.

Methods

Dòighean

This Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan is an evidence-based document, which is the result of a two-phased audit and of a two-phased consultation. These works originally started as part of the previous Tourism Infrastructure Plan mentioned above. The first phase of the audit, carried out in 2019, gave an overview of existing relevant tourism infrastructure in Highland and identified some gaps in provision. It was followed by a first consultation phase in December 2020, mainly aimed at community councils and local groups, who were invited to comment on the sites identified, identify any further gaps, and provide any information they had on any activity proposed locally that would improve tourism infrastructure provision.

In summer 2021, these works were picked up again as part of the new strategic plan initiative funded by RTIF. The earlier audit was reviewed to include additional entries particularly where these were identified during the consultation, as well as adding more detail. After the consultation results were analysed, a more informal engagement phase took place with targeted stakeholders (those likely to deliver tourism infrastructure projects - e.g. individual Council services, public agencies, NGOs and community companies). This enabled officers to sense check issues and solutions and ensure better awareness of ongoing projects already being taken forward by others. In addition, existing local tourism plans and local research were taken into account to produce this strategy. From the audit and consultation phases a series of tourism infrastructure priorities emerged, which were weighed against officer knowledge, before being included in the plan.

In parallel to this, officers identified hotspot areas to fit in with the strategic remit expected by RTIF as part of the funding package. Based on the engagement described above and data such as that gathered by the seasonal access rangers employed during summer 2021, officers identified eight areas where there were particular pressures at multiple sites or multiple pressures within an area rather than simply a single pressure on a single site or location. These areas were also ones where the actual numbers of visitors were high and / or carrying capacity was less so the related pressures were more severe. This was borne out by the data recorded by the access rangers and ultimately led to the following eight hotspots being identified:

- Glen Etive and Glencoe
- The Road to the Isles (Glenfinnan to Mallaig)
- Glen Nevis
- The Isle of Skye
- North West Highlands (Loch Broom to Durness)
- Applecross and area
- Fortrose – Rosemarkie – Chanonry Point
- The Aviemore to Glenmore corridor.

While these hotspots were identified in line with RTIF criteria that is designed to flag up strategically important tourism infrastructure needs at a national level, the entirety of the Highland area can face tourism pressures requiring attention. Although the visitor numbers might not be as high nor the impacts as pronounced, some smaller communities which have a lower carrying capacity can also be strongly affected by tourism pressures. In order to reflect this reality, the plan organises the identified priorities in two tiers.

The first tier covers priorities located in the eight strategic hotspots, where tourism infrastructure is urgently needed to address multiple pressures at multiple sites. These are also the priorities which could be considered to be of national significance and so most likely to attract (national) RTIF funding. Meanwhile, the second tier covers more locally important priorities across all the rest of the Highland area, which are more likely to be addressed through other more local funding streams.



Audit of tourism infrastructure

Sgrùdadh air Bun-structar Turasachd

As much of the infrastructure used by visitors is also used by Highland residents in their day-to-day activities it can be difficult to define exactly what “tourism infrastructure” is. Similarly, it can be difficult to define what should qualify as infrastructure – for example a formally built car park at a visitor site would be considered by most people as tourism infrastructure but parking on the road verge might not. In undertaking the audit of tourism infrastructure, a series of principles have therefore been used to try and define tourism infrastructure in a consistent way: -

- The facility should be primarily aimed at or used by visitors.
- Infrastructure which can be used by visitors but is more widely used by residents or businesses such as roads, cycle tracks, footpaths, harbours, piers, slipways and waste & recycling centres are not included.
- The facility must be publicly available - typically this will mean provision is by public sector or community organisations.
- Where a facility is clearly made available to non-customers, particularly if a formal arrangement is in place, some commercially provided facilities can be included - for example, toilets in cafes, restaurants etc are only included where they are recognised Highland Comfort Scheme Providers¹.



NC500 signposts

The types of infrastructure considered particularly relevant to visitors that have been included in the audit are:

- **Car parking**
 - Off-road parking in popular tourism destinations (but excluding larger settlements where a significant amount of both on and off-road parking is generally available).
 - Off-road parking at visitor sites, or access points for leisure activities such as a walk.
 - Roadside laybys where these are primarily used by visitors for an extended stop where the occupants park to undertake an activity away from the vehicle.
 - Dedicated overnight parking for motorhomes - excluding commercial caravan and camping sites but including community-run facilities.

Across Highland there are many hundreds of car parks or other public areas such as on-road parking and laybys where cars can be parked. Many will be in larger communities and/or used almost entirely by local people for parking at their home or for work, shopping or to use local services. While sometimes used by visitors, these are not considered “tourism

¹ The Highland Comfort Scheme is a Highland Council arrangement where a regular payment is made to providers of toilet facilities in order for their facility to be made publicly available. A list of providers can be found at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/283/community_life_and_leisure/814/highland_council_public_toilets

infrastructure” so were not included in the audit. Similarly, roadside laybys typically used for a brief stop such as a rest stop or to take a photograph are excluded. Parking areas where a visitor will normally leave their car for a longer period of time so as to visit a community, beach or other natural feature, or to undertake an activity such as walking, cycling, water sports or fishing, might however reasonably be considered to be dedicated “tourism infrastructure”.

- **Electric Vehicle charge points**

- Public sector provided charge points
- Charge points provided by private businesses and others but made publicly available.

Although not necessarily dedicated “tourism infrastructure” electric vehicle (EV) charge points have been included here in recognition of the importance that having a good network of charging points is in giving visitors traveling by electric vehicles the confidence to visit an area. It also recognises Scotland’s ambition to move away from petrol and diesel vehicles meaning the need for such facilities will become increasingly important to visitors.

- **Public toilets**

- Highland Council operated facilities
- Facilities operated with support from the Council (Highland Comfort Scheme)
- Facilities operated by public sector partners such as Forestry & Land Scotland or NatureScot
- Other facilities made freely available to the wider public by organisations such as NGOs or communities.

- **Motorhome waste disposal facilities**

- Waste facilities on commercial sites made available to non-residents
- Standalone motorhome waste facilities.



Motorhome in Assynt

- **Public Wi-Fi services**

Public Wi-Fi services was included in the original 2019 audit of tourism infrastructure with a view to subsequently including it as one of the types of infrastructure where more was

required. However, feedback from the 2020 consultation suggests this is now a lower priority compared to other types of infrastructure such as parking, public conveniences and motorhome facilities. In addition, mobile coverage has improved in many (but not all) areas particularly where upgrades were made on the back of the emergency services contract. The existing public Wi-Fi networks provided in many of the more significant towns and villages in Highland, alongside mobile services and Wi-Fi provision in most businesses, mean there is now at least a basic level of provision.

Monetising this type of service has been notoriously difficult for a variety of providers, both public and private. When taken alongside the fact that there are challenges in terms of meeting the ongoing costs of maintaining public Wi-Fi services, it would be costly, not just in terms of installation but also ongoing management to rollout these services further and as such additional Wi-Fi services have not been included amongst the priorities in this plan.

The information included in the audit was gathered through a mix of the existing knowledge of the Council tourism officers, data provided by other Council services who regularly meet with communities (including the Access Rangers, local staff and service providers such as the Roads Teams), desktop research and consultation feedback. Although not part of the audit itself, the solutions that have been identified below do include related facilities and services that form part of the proposals for addressing tourism pressures such as waste collection and recycling, public transport services, active travel infrastructure, paths and trails for pedestrians and cyclists and some traffic management features.

As is to be expected with this type of exercise, especially given the scale of the area covered, the audit is as inclusive and accurate as possible but may still omit some facilities that may have merited inclusion. So far, the tourism infrastructure audit has identified:

- 544 car parks that could be considered primarily visitor car parks
- 133 electric vehicle charging points
- 164 public conveniences
- 44 motorhome waste disposal facilities.

Consultation

Co-chomhairle

A wider public consultation was commenced in November 2020 to give stakeholders a chance to comment on a draft of the original Tourism Infrastructure Plan. The Highland Council Tourism and Ward Management teams circulated the draft plan to a variety of stakeholders, including agencies, community councils and trusts and other local organisations. Tourism officers also attended a number of Ward Business Meetings to gather elected member views on the plan and on what they considered to be the priorities for their areas.

A total of 51 responses to this consultation were received as follows²:

- 22 Community Council responses
- 9 Other local organisation responses
- 4 responses from individual members of the public
- 3 public sector agency responses
- 13 Council Ward Business Meetings

Overall, respondents were supportive of the rationale for a Tourism Infrastructure Plan and the approach taken by The Highland Council to identify existing infrastructure and gaps to be able to address them. There seemed to be a general consensus around the need for more public conveniences, overnight parking areas and motorhome waste facilities. The principle of having a network of certain types of infrastructure such as EV charging points and motorhome waste disposal facilities was also welcomed by a majority of respondents. It is also worth noting that respondents highlighted the importance of promoting existing and new infrastructure adequately.

Consultees shared some constructive feedback and in particular identified infrastructure and gaps that had been missed out in the 2019 audit. Their contributions have been included in the updated version of the audit and have helped establish a more accurate representation of tourism infrastructure in Highland and what local priorities were.

There were also some concerns that the approach taken through the plan might be too localised or restricted to certain themes, which would prevent the Council “seeing the bigger picture”. Some respondents also pointed out that residents and visitors largely used the same facilities and feared being excluded from infrastructure improvements which reflects some of the challenges in identifying tourism infrastructure described on [page 6](#). This can also be linked to the ongoing debate around charging for some Council facilities and services. On this, opinions appeared to be split, with some seeing it as a useful revenue stream to protect services or allow further investment while others feared that this would mean that they could no longer use some facilities.

Further consultees regretted that footpath, active travel and public transport infrastructure or signposting were not included to a more significant extent. Although still not specifically included in the audit, these views are now reflected much more strongly in the proposed solutions which try to encourage a move away from an approach solely based around providing additional parking.

In addition, there were some suggestions around restrictions rather than additional provision – such as controlling the number of visitors or types of vehicles allowed to access certain locations.

² A complete list is available in [Appendix 2](#).

Finally, a number of comments were made on maintenance and small interventions on specific locations, as well as day-to-day delivery of Council services such as waste management. These are now included in the Council's Visitor Management Plan – a separate but complementary piece of work focussing on shorter-term solutions.

A second and more informal consultation stage took place between November 2021 and January 2022 with a targeted group of partners³. These included video calls with a wide range of stakeholders including other services within The Highland Council, other public sector agencies, NGOs, and selected community groups who were considered likely to deliver tourism infrastructure projects in the identified hotspot areas. The aim of this engagement phase was to share resources, sense check the priorities that had been identified through the earlier phases of consultation as well as to identify partners' plans and projects and avoid duplication. This further engagement has also allowed the plan to paint a broader picture of public tourism infrastructure provision and needs and to support partners' efforts in trying to attract funding for their projects.



Glenfinnan Viaduct – one location where an active community group have delivered visitor parking

In order to ensure appropriate governance, a presentation of the approach taken in developing this plan and an outline of the plan contents was given to the Highland Council Tourism Committee on 6th December 2021. Members of the Committee approved the approach being taken.

³ See list in [Appendix 3](#).

Overarching principles

Prionnsapalan Tar-ruigheach

While this plan proposes a number of different infrastructure solutions depending on the location and its tourism challenges, there are two core elements in the RTIF criteria that describe the main objectives for tourism infrastructure projects: -

1. Alleviating existing or anticipated visitor pressures

“As a result of previous increases in visitor numbers, there is a visitor and or community pressure point which is likely to continue and needs to be addressed. [Projects] should describe [an area’s] pressure point(s) [...] and what actions [are] propose[d] to address the issues.”

2. Delivering an enhanced visitor experience

This is expected to happen “through the provision of improved visitor facilities and infrastructure, particularly in areas that have experienced pressure from increased visitor numbers, leading to a positive impact on the local landscape and visitor economy and improving access for all.”

In order to address these requirements, the Council feels there are a number of overarching principles that should apply to all projects – and these principles reflect the type of infrastructure the Council wants to support and the sustainable societal changes it wants to encourage.

Carbon conscious

Tourism infrastructure projects should consider incorporating elements that facilitate a transition towards a carbon-free society. To ensure this is fully considered, the default position for any car parking project should be that EV charging points are included unless circumstances would suggest otherwise (e.g., remote sites without a suitable power supply or where there is suitable alternative provision nearby).

Similarly, project proposals should support non-car-based travel options by including public transport and active travel infrastructure wherever possible, for example favouring a shuttle bus service over the construction of a new car park – where visitor volumes justify it and a service is considered commercially viable. To help counter climate change, adding planting to infrastructure and taking into account the entire life cycle of a structure by trying to re-use and re-purpose materials is also encouraged. Where infrastructure is already built, retrofitting should be considered.

Respectful of the physical carrying capacity

While developing infrastructure, there also needs to be recognition of the physical carrying capacity of a site, that is, the number of visitors it can reasonably welcome at any one time. If a location tends to be at capacity during peak season, the project should consider ways to inform potential visitors of the site’s busyness in advance, for instance using technology solutions such as sensors and variable message signs. Additional preventive measures such as traffic management might also need to be considered to ensure a location’s capacity is respected.

Respectful of the social carrying capacity

Projects should be developed in partnership with the local community and take their views into account. Whilst this plan proposes a series of projects, these are expected to require further engagement with residents around final project details and design. In addition, projects should look at opportunities for communities to benefit from the facilities created, for example through charging for use of some facilities or asset transfers.

Respectful of the environmental carrying capacity

The environmental carrying capacity of project locations should also be taken into consideration. When exploring potential sites, designated conservation areas should be avoided as much as possible unless infrastructure is absolutely necessary. Knock-on effects on surrounding areas also need to be taken into account, as a new facility might generate additional impact on site but also affect areas nearby. Similarly, restrictions at a current pressure point might cause displacement to neighbouring sites.

An infrastructure that becomes part of the landscape

In line with the principle of environmental carrying capacity, infrastructure should be of the right scale at the right location with the right design. A facility should not be bigger than it needs to be and should be naturally inserted in its surroundings. This might require landscaping of the tourism site and the inclusion of green infrastructure⁴, such as vegetal walls, turfed roofs, composting toilets, honeycomb surfacing in car parks, etc. Cultural elements such as Gaelic heritage can also be integrated into the design. In addition to supporting biodiversity, this would contribute to enhancing the visitor experience by making the infrastructure an integral part of their journey.

A strategic approach to infrastructure project development

The general strategic approach of this plan should also apply to the projects within it. This should be done by considering adding other defined infrastructure elements to the main project to ensure possible future developments are planned for if relevant to the location, or to help ensure a suitable network of facilities is provided across Highland. For example, when car parks are built, they do not always include the necessary space for general waste disposal units, nor for a bin lorry or a shuttle bus to access the site. Better anticipation would also help include the required ground works for later EV charging provision or active travel infrastructure such as bike racks or shelters. The increased need for EV charging points in future should be included in a project where possible, so that, even if a charging point itself is not yet installed, there could be the necessary groundwork to do so. For motorhome waste disposal points, water refill infrastructure could also be considered. In addition, where infrastructure is developed, adequate signposting and promotion of the facility should be taken into account.

⁴ Further information on green infrastructure is available on NatureScot's website at:

<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/placemaking-and-green-infrastructure/green-infrastructure>

General thematic considerations

Beachdachadh cuspaireil coitcheann

While this plan takes a strategic geographical approach centred around hotspots, there are some elements of the rationale which are not area specific but are related to certain themes and types of infrastructure. These are laid out below to avoid unnecessary repetition later in the plan.

Networks of facilities

While in certain locations, specific infrastructure like a car park or public conveniences will be required on site, for other types of infrastructure it makes sense to aim for a network of facilities over the whole Highland area. Self-contained motorhomes can travel for around three days before needing to empty their waste tanks so there is not a need for these amenities in every community, but rather a good network of sites that is also well publicised to allow visitors to plan their stops accordingly. The same could apply to overnight parking areas and EV charging points, though regarding the latter, it is anticipated that facilities will progressively be required everywhere (see section below). Another reason for developing some tourism facilities in networks is that suitable locations would be dependent on other supporting infrastructure being suitable – for example having a suitable sewage system in place, or a sufficiently high-capacity power supply for an EV charging point.

Overnight parking areas for motorhomes

As previously mentioned, this strategic plan focusses on tourism infrastructure that is mainly provided by the public sector, although some exceptions might be made when relevant facilities are provided commercially but made easily available for public use or access.

Particularly with regards to overnight parking for motorhomes, there is already a commercial market in terms of both existing caravan and campsites, and the emerging network of privately operated stopovers often described using the French name “Aire” or in Highland the Gaelic “Àirigh”. The Highland Council considers that this is a business opportunity, for example for landowners, farmers or crofters who have suitable land or for businesses such as restaurants or bars that may wish to offer such a service to drive additional trade, and as such would expect most provision of these types of sites would be taken forward by the private sector.

However, the growing numbers of motorhome visitors and the resulting pressures at certain locations is leading to an increased demand from users for more small-scale facilities and some demand from communities for alternative provision to reduce instances of inappropriate overnight camping in laybys, car parks etc.

The current legislative position is that the driver of any vehicle has the right to park and rest in any layby or car park when necessary as long as the car park concerned is not regulated and specific regulations prevent this. Any such regulations must be displayed to potential users. Essentially this is to ensure road safety and so any activity must take place within the vehicle. Anyone stopping overnight and erecting accessories such as an awning, putting out tables and chairs or having a barbeque is deemed to be camping not parking. The driver must also be in a position to move the vehicle if required which also means stopovers where the driver may wish to consume alcohol should be on recognised sites or on private land with the landowner’s permission.

At present where a car park is regulated, camping will typically be prohibited – and the majority of the Council’s rural car parks are not currently regulated (although a process to regulate more of those that are well used is under way). This means the Council has limited powers to prevent their use for overnight stops but also suggests there is a need for appropriate levels of management to ensure adequate locations are available.

It is considered more appropriate at this time that the Council recognise that there is a general need for more provision and support others such as communities in providing facilities where they are keen to do so rather than providing dedicated facilities itself. However, in seeking to improve the management of some car parks that are already well used for overnight stops, it may be appropriate for the Council to manage use in Council car parks through the introduction of regulations and / or charges. As well as managing numbers at some locations, this could also help reduce use of locations that might be considered inappropriate or sensitive such as cemetery car parks.

EV charging points

With the use of electric vehicles growing there is anticipated to be demand for further charging points. This includes both:

- Additional points in locations that have some existing provision but where provision may not meet current or anticipated levels of demand.
- New charge points in locations where charge points are not yet available.

The rate of growth in usage, allied with changes in battery technology which affect the range of EVs make it difficult to identify how quickly and / or how far apart new or additional provision will be required.

With increasing numbers of visitors travelling in electric vehicles the provision of EV charge points in a community is also seen to be a way of increasing dwell time and boosting economic benefits as visitors can be encouraged to use local businesses while their vehicle charges. In a similar way there is merit in considering whether charge points in communities might be complemented by provision at some key tourism sites. This could improve the visitor experience by allowing vehicles to be charged while the visitor undertakes their visit.



New electric vehicle charging points at Brora on the NC500.

Many commercial attractions are expected to provide EV charging for their own customers and existing plans for new publicly funded provision are already in progress. The publicly provided facilities are based on Transport Scotland and Highland Council recommendations which in turn reflect public suggestions and include good coverage for visitors. It is not considered that any activity beyond that already proposed is currently required unless this is as an enhancement to wider developments as described above. However, any plans for further phases of provision should continue to recognise the needs of visitors and any new tourism infrastructure should consider including EV charging if the location allows it.

Footpath and cycling networks

With many of Highland's visitors coming to the area specifically for walking holidays and most others doing some walking as a leisure activity while here, the network of paths and trails they use can be considered a key part of the area's tourism infrastructure.

Perhaps best known from a visitor perspective are the three formally designated national Long-Distance Trails – The Great Glen Way, West Highland Way and Speyside Way – with the latter two also including sections that extend into other local authority areas. Other long-distance routes such as the South Loch Ness Trail, Affric-Kintail Way and John o' Groats Trail also exist but are not formally designated in the same way and opportunities exist for further routes to be developed⁵.

Numerous other paths also exist and under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 the Council has a statutory duty to produce a Core Path Plan which records many of these⁶.

The Council's obligations in relation to the Core Path Plan is for these to be reviewed periodically. This is done on a sub-regional basis with some reviews having recently taken place while others are still under way. A formal process already exists for reviewing paths which can include the addition of new paths, and there are also funding streams specifically aimed at paths. With the Core Path Plans already acting as a strategic plan for paths and the fact that dedicated path projects are not eligible for funding through RTIF, it was not deemed relevant to provide detailed information on paths in this plan.

However, the Council recognises that paths are an important part of Highland's tourism infrastructure for both visitors and residents. Therefore, where proposed path works are coherently connected to an infrastructure development project and they could allow improved access to a facility or an attraction close by (e.g. a viewpoint), these could be included in this plan as an "add-on" to a project. It is also recognised that some sections of path can be part of a more holistic approach to tackling tourism pressures in certain locations. There are circumstances where creating new connecting paths to a particular attraction, for example from existing car parks further afield, may be preferable to expanding or building new car parks closer by. This is particularly likely to be an appropriate approach where the attraction itself may be in an environmentally, scenically or culturally sensitive location.

⁵ Information on these can be found on the Council's website at:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/outdoorhighlands/info/1/long_distance_trails_in_the_highlands/3/long_distance_routes

⁶ An interactive map of the numerous Core Paths is available at:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/outdoorhighlands/info/2/paths_in_the_highlands/1/paths_in_the_highlands

Individual area maps also downloadable from:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1225/countryside_farming_and_wildlife/161/outdoor_access/4

As with the path network, the cycling and mountain biking route and trail networks are an increasingly important part of the Highlands' tourism infrastructure. Perhaps most notably there are three sections of the National Cycle Network located in Highland (Routes 1, 7 and 78), as well as the Loch Ness 360 route and dedicated mountain bike routes and trail centres. With dedicated funding streams being available through Sustrans, the fact that many are also likely to be supported through utility cycling related schemes, and the fact this type of infrastructure as a standalone project is not eligible for RTIF funding, it was not deemed relevant to include the full range of cycling infrastructure ambitions as priorities in the plan.

Nevertheless, it is recognised that, as with paths, some cycling infrastructure can be part of the more holistic approach to tackling tourism pressures in certain locations. In particular offering clearly identified, safe and convenient active travel opportunities with suitable facilities at the destination can be a major contributing factor in the push to get people to use alternatives to car transport. Some short connecting sections of cycle path might be considered as part of a wider tourism infrastructure project, as might new or dedicated active travel infrastructure which is aimed at getting visitors to a destination by bike as opposed to by car. This is particularly likely to be an appropriate approach where any new infrastructure links to a railway station or a community where visitors are likely to be staying meaning they can make an entire journey to their destination without a car.



Cycling towards Balnakeil Bay from Durness

One rapidly growing part of cycling is the use of e-bikes and it is anticipated that in future larger numbers of people making active travel journeys including those to tourism sites will do so on e-bikes. This is likely to increase the need for adapted charging facilities, but unlike electric vehicles where outdoor charging is normal, it is currently unclear whether the best solution for e-bike charging will be to provide outdoor public facilities.

With e-bikes tending to be high value items and having easily removable batteries, many riders are anticipated to be nervous about leaving bikes and their batteries unattended while they charge. In view of this, a number of indoor options are being developed, such as charging towers where the battery is removed from the bike and charged in a compartment in a lockable unit – similar to the method used for charging mobile phones in locations such as airports. This type of approach is being used by organisations such as Sustrans, who are for example rolling out charging options on the NCN78 Campbeltown - Oban - Fort William - Inverness cycle route. For cycle security many users may also prefer taking their bike to a more easily observed location such as close to them on a beach they are visiting rather than leaving it out of sight in places such as car parks. While the Council does propose encouraging e-bike use through interventions like bike parking, it is likely that in some

situations the best place to roll out more charging facilities are within indoor venues like visitor centres, cafes or village halls rather than outdoors in places like new car parks.

Public transport

While public transport is considered a service rather than physical infrastructure, increasing public transport use by visitors is seen to be an effective way of addressing climate change and of alleviating some of the pressures caused by unfulfilled demand for parking. In order to support the operation of public transport services to and from popular tourist sites, there will be instances where additional dedicated infrastructure might be required. This could include elements such as a shelter for waiting passengers, suitable laybys or dedicated areas of car parks for pick-up and drop-off of passengers or adjustments to the layout of a site to allow large vehicles such as buses to turn.

In addition, some areas which have constraints that prevent other infrastructure being developed or sites which have significant numbers travelling to the site at a similar time may lend themselves to park and ride or shuttle bus type services. As well as requiring infrastructure at the destination, these services are likely to require the creation of a suitable start point for those journeys which could be an adaptation to an existing car park or creation of a new dedicated facility. This plan therefore considers the inclusion of the infrastructure to support public transport as part of the solution in a number of locations including places where the public transport or park and ride service does not yet exist.

Separate to this plan, the Council is also working on a number of transport initiatives, both internally and with partners such as HITRANS (the statutory regional transport partnership). These include regional plans such as a Fort William area bus infrastructure plan and elements of these plans and the projects they create will be used to support visitor travel as well as the needs of residents wherever possible.

Public conveniences

While priority projects in this plan will include some capital investment towards public conveniences, it might be preferable where possible to support additional Comfort Schemes instead. This is due to difficulties within the Council to continue to maintain and clean a growing number of amenities, when many of them already require to be upgraded. As the Highland Comfort Scheme largely involves providing support to third-party providers to cover ongoing operational costs these will normally require continued revenue support rather than one-off infrastructure investment.

Tier one – Strategic hotspot areas

Ìre 1 – Prìomh Àiteachan Ro-innleachdail

As described above, the Council has identified eight hotspot areas within Highland. These eight areas were ones where there were particular pressures at multiple sites or multiple pressures within an area rather than simply a single pressure on a single site. They were also ones where the actual numbers of visitors were high and / or carrying capacity was less so the related pressures were more severe.

Reflecting the strategic remit of this plan, these are locations considered to be of national tourism importance and where it would therefore be reasonable to expect a degree of national support to assist in addressing the pressures they face. Each of these hotspot areas is considered in turn with further details on the area, the pressures faced, the evidence that exists and the proposed solutions.

Glen Etive and Glencoe

Gleann Èite agus Gleann Comhann

Background

Glencoe is one of the best-known glens in Scotland, being famous both due to its dramatic scenery but also its important place in Scottish history. Its position on the main A82 trunk road which runs the full length of the glen makes it both easily accessible and for many visitors the first part of Highland they see. These factors all contribute to it being a hugely popular destination and unlike most areas of Highland which are further afield, it is close enough to see day trips or very short stays from the more heavily populated towns and cities of Central Scotland. Neighbouring Glen Etive is much quieter but as a 25km long cul-de-sac with only a single track road, limited parking and no public transport, the numbers that do visit can still put pressure on the glen and numbers have been increasing in recent years.

Both glens have a high profile from being featured in movies such as the James Bond film Skyfall, while images of mountains such as Buachaille Etive Mòr are iconic images of Scotland used to promote Scotland in the UK and overseas. Amongst the outdoor community, the area offers some of the best sport in Scotland. The Munros surrounding both glens are some of the most popular in Scotland and offer some of the best technical climbing to be found on Scottish mountains. The popular West Highland Way crosses the east end of the glen and the River Etive is recognised as one of Scotland's classic rivers for white water kayaking. Many people also visit to wild camp due to the relative accessibility of the area.

Pressures

Although some public bus services run through Glencoe – essentially the Glasgow – Fort William – Skye long distance services, these are fairly infrequent and intercity services do not stop at as many locations. This means that visitors to Glencoe are almost entirely car based and parking is subsequently the most notable pressure.

Parking issues can be split into two fairly distinct groups – firstly those parking for longer periods of time to walk, climb or undertake other activities for the day. This largely takes place along the A82 between the Glen Etive turning and the Clachaig Inn turning at the foot of the glen, or in Glen Etive where a number of hill access points also exist. The second group can loosely be described as more general visitors who more commonly park at one of the places in the lower part of the glen to visit historic sites, the NTS visitor centre or Glencoe village. Many of these visitors also make brief stops at some of the popular viewpoints throughout the glen, such as the Three Sisters car parks (which are also well used by walkers and climbers) or at the Meeting of the Three Waters. However, this pattern of usage tends to lead to quite a high turnover of vehicles rather than longer-term parking. This higher turnover of cars is less common in Glen Etive.

As well as some daytime pressures, Glen Etive also sees greater pressures with overnight parking as a number of spots are heavily used for wild camping while others are used by overnighing motorhomes. In both cases some vehicles are often parked inconsiderately, sometimes on the road verges and in some cases overlapping the narrow road in such a way as to cause an obstruction.

Glencoe village itself is also a well-visited location and while there is a small car park with public toilets at the west end of the village, its capacity is quite small (30 cars) and frequently inadequate meaning overflow parking has been required.

As with most of the “hotspot” areas in Highland, pressures are most commonly felt during holiday periods and summer weekends. However, the winter sports opportunities can attract huge numbers even on winter days when the conditions are right. An example of this comes from mid-January 2018, when perfect snow conditions and calm, sunny weather led to long tailbacks on the A82 as skiers, climbers and walkers flocked to the area and parking areas struggled to cope⁷.

← Tweet



Northern Police
@northernPolice

TRAFFIC ISSUES AT @glencoemountain & @TheNevisRange .

Car parks at both ski resorts are now FULL. Cars left on access roads are causing obstructions for gritters and other vehicles. Please remove them or risk them being seized.

1:11 PM · Jan 20, 2018 · TweetDeck

Limited public toilet provision is also a notable pressure as, with the exception of Glencoe village, there are no public toilet facilities in the glen. Indeed, with the exception of the Glencoe ski centre and the Kingshouse Hotel there are no businesses in the upper glen or in Glen Etive, so there are few opportunities even for visitors to become customers and use the toilet facilities of their bar, café etc. This, combined with the numbers wild camping in some locations has led to increased levels of wild toileting across the area.

Evidence

An idea of Glencoe and Glen Etive’s busyness can be gauged from the visitor numbers at the Glencoe Visitor Centre. According to the Moffat Centre’s Visitor Attraction Monitor, 436,924 entries were recorded in 2019, making the attraction the first free one in terms of frequentation in Highland, and the third one all admission policies combined. NTS also estimates that 2 million vehicles drive through Glencoe every year. This popularity is confirmed by the numbers of vehicles that the Glencoe community recorded in their car parks. The Glencoe village car park saw 2075 parked cars

⁷ BBC News. Traffic chaos at Nevis Range and Glencoe ski centres. 20.01.2018. Online: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-42760394>

over the 2021 season, plus 103 motorhomes or campervans. In the temporary car park itself, 892 cars were logged over the same period, but also significant numbers of motorhomes with 468 such vehicles recorded. Finally, 1090 cars and 317 campervans were also noted to have used the Pap of Glencoe car park.

The area's popularity has resulted in many impacts on the area and its local community, who have organised themselves in the Glencoe and Glen Etive SCIO and initiated the "Love the Glen" campaign to deal with the tourism issues. This has also led to the creation of the Facebook page *Glen Etive The Dirty Truth* a few years ago to raise awareness about the particularly significant problem of "dirty camping" in Glen Etive by sharing pictures of the damage left by it.

In 2021, the Highland Council Access Rangers had a South East Lochaber patrol, mainly covering Glencoe and Glen Etive, who gathered data confirming the pressures described above. Though the figures have to be used with caution due to there being fewer patrols carried out than in other Highland areas, the conclusions remain the same.

814 tents were counted throughout the season, which is slightly over the number for the whole of Badenoch and Strathspey, also subject to camping pressures. This averaged to 17.7 tents seen per patrol, which is significantly over the average of other Highland patrol areas (5.6 tents per patrol). The patrol area was also the worst in Highland for fire marks with a total of 342 recorded, which is 7.4 per patrol – again far above the Highland average of 2.26.

The following notes from the Access Rangers' patrol reports give a clear picture of the "dirty camping" that is frequently taking place in Glen Etive:

- Weekend of 22-23rd May: "A large group of campervans in Loch Etive car park [used] every inch of tarmac, [causing] issues with bin-lorry next morning, which according to local stalker had to reverse over a mile to get turned. [This] caused upset with local community."
- July: Rangers "dual patrolled due to a report the previous day of some hostile people in the glen [...]. Glen Etive was very messy and busy, [Rangers] removed three abandoned tents."
- July: "Lots of fire pits removed from Glen Etive, however they always get rebuilt by campers."
- 22nd August: "Reports from Glencoe Wardens of group chopping trees last night, has left already but spoke to another camper who told me they had chopped more trees and been intimidating." The Ranger reported this to the Police.
- September, Loch Etive Car Park: "At least three big camping groups over [the] weekend, damage to trees and litter. [...] Fallen tree trunk has been placed in fire pit also. [...] Witnessed man peeing into river, told him to stop and explained why that was problematic."



On the left, an area of Glen Etive regularly damaged by “dirty camping”, with tents and camping gear, barbeques and fire pits left behind⁸. On the right, one of the busy car parks in Glencoe⁹.

Previous activity

Parking infrastructure in Glencoe and Glen Etive has simply not been able to cope with the growing number of cars, coaches and campervans that it attracts. Therefore in 2020, The Highland Council in partnership with NTS and with the support of local communities, successfully submitted a bid to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to create additional parking provision. This included five areas along Glen Etive, expanding the Three Sisters upper and lower car parks in Glencoe, as well as upgrading linking footpaths, signage and waste hubs along the stretch of the two glens. While this project has seen some initial delays, it is expected to be completed during 2022.

A ‘Love the Glen’ campaign to engage with visitors online was also created by NTS in partnership with the local SCIO and supported by local landowners. Six short videos were created highlighting the area’s key problems – litter, fire damage, toileting, parking, footpaths, and habitat, and presented solutions to the visitor on how they could help by leaving no trace. The campaign also makes a special appeal for donations to support the long-term planned investments in the glens which appears to have had a positive outcome.

There has been a significant amount of work undertaken locally as well with the Glencoe & Glen Etive Community SCIO receiving funding from the Better Places Green Recovery Fund to create a temporary car park in the village of Glencoe, along with installation of two temporary toilet blocks (4 toilets in each block) and two IBC tanks for the disposal of chemical toilet waste. These were strategically located across two car parks in the village, the temporary car park at the start of the village and at the Green Pool car park at the far end of village.

Furthermore, the SCIO successfully applied for a second project to the Better Places Green Recovery Fund for five community wardens, working 16 hours a week each from the beginning of June to the end of October 2021. Wardens patrolled the Glencoe/Glen Etive area, and also covered Glenachulish and Cuil Bay, a popular overnight camping spot. Their messaging, like the Highland Council Access Rangers’, was to promote the ‘Leave No Trace’ principle and encourage responsible behaviour in the outdoors. Both projects have been widely acknowledged as a success story. While

⁸ Source: Facebook. Glen Etive the dirty truth. March 2021.

⁹ Source: NTS. Scotland’s most famous glen to receive funding to improve visitor experience. 17th February 2021.

there is no confirmation of additional funding to run both projects in 2022, the SCIO are actively researching different funding options to continue this important work.

Glencoe and Glen Etive have also seen the benefits the Highland Councils 2021 Visitor Management Plan by seeing three Access Rangers covering the Lochaber area introduced in 2021, as well as small-scale passing place works in Glen Etive and additional waste management collections at pressurised locations – particularly where visitors had been camping informally.

Project proposal

In light of the significant parking pressures detailed above, the Highland Council and its partners propose to increase the capacity of some of the car parks locally, but also to support active travel solutions to offer more sustainable options for visitors discovering the area.

The first project proposed, led by NTS, is to create a Glencoe Greenway providing visitors wanting to explore the glen from Glencoe village or from the visitor centre with both a walking and cycling travel option by connecting existing paths. This would help alleviate congestion and support the transition towards sustainable travel.

In parallel, another initiative would be the provision of a new car park in Glencoe village, where an overflow has been required throughout the 2021 season. Delivered by the Glencoe and Glen Etive SCIO, this project would complement the expected NTS car parking improvements which are funded through RTIF.

Another possible sustainable transport project would be to propose a Park and Ride system, with a start point car park based at the Glencoe Mountain Resort, which is quiet during the summer season. This would allow visitors to be dropped off at different locations throughout the glen and reduce traffic. This project would require an initial trial to test viability and would require revenue-funding support, so costs are not included in this plan although costs for some supporting infrastructure such as shelters are.

The parking situation in Glen Etive is heavily connected with the popularity of informal camping locally, which is why active travel and public transport solutions are less suited for the area. Instead, some car parking improvements are required along the glen, primarily at the Glen Etive Road End car park, which might be the most frequented single parking area in the glen. With a better parking regulation in place, it is expected that a positive impact will ensue with regards to camping pressures.

In addition, public toilet refurbishments in Glencoe village and Ballachulish would help the current facilities cope better with the level of tourists coming to the area and therefore contribute to address the outdoor toileting problem. There have also been some suggestions that public toilets should be provided in Glen Etive to reduce the outdoor toileting impacts encountered there. However, the Glen Etive community is not currently in favour of public toilets and concerns exist that while providing toilets at popular camping spots could reduce toileting issues, their provision might inadvertently encourage more people to camp there. New toilets are therefore not proposed at this time.

The tables below summarise the details and estimated costs for the projects which the Highland Council and its partners hope to be taking forward more immediately.

Glencoe Greenway - A82 Glencoe Active Travel Project

Project Summary			
This project will deliver a approx. 2.5km of path provision to create traffic-free access into the heart of the glen from the west via Glencoe Visitor Centre. This project will connect with existing paths into Glencoe village and the popular Caledonia Way (National Cycle Network route 87), establishing the "Glencoe Greenway". Several stretches of existing path will also need widening in places at the same time to upgrade them to meet standards for all active travel users.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Path / cycle route creation	2.5km	£200,000	
Path upgrades to allow cycle use	Multiple sections	£100,000	
Bridge	1	£100,000	
Safe path crossing	1	£100,000	A82 road crossing
Total Cost		£500,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	National Trust for Scotland		
Permissions required	Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Already in Place SEPA <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner Lease <input type="checkbox"/> NTS is the Landowner Other <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.		
Potential barriers	Securing match funding		
Match Funding	To be confirmed – NTS, Transport Scotland, Hitrans, Sustrans, crowdfunding		
Future revenue streams	NTS Visitor Centre income will go towards maintaining the 60km of Glencoe’s National Nature Reserve for which there is a Footpath Fund.		
Timescale	Design phase - 4 Months Tender process and appointment of contractor – 2 Months Construction – 3 Months Completion by Autumn 2023.		

Glencoe Village & Ballachulish Public Toilet Upgrades

Project Summary
<p>Glencoe village public toilets upgrade Replacing urinals, replacing WCs and seats, replacing sinks and units underneath, replacing cubicle walls, new flooring, new covered heaters, painting inside and outside.</p> <p>Ballachulish public toilets upgrade</p>

Replacing urinals, replacing WCs and seats, replacing sinks and units underneath, replacing cubicle walls, new flooring, new covered heaters, painting inside and outside.

Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Glencoe Public Toilet	1	£100,000	
Ballachulish Public Toilet	1	£100,000	
Project delivery costs		£20,000	
Total Cost		£220,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council		
Permissions required – None Required	Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	SEPA	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Scottish Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Landowner Lease	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.	
Potential barriers			
Match Funding	Highland Council		
Future revenue streams	Highland Council makes small charges for facilities across Highland to cover maintenance costs of all toilet properties.		
Timescale	Tender - 2 Months Construction - 4-6 Months		

Glencoe Village Car Park

Project Summary			
Creation of a car park situated on land previously used for a community composting site within the village of Glencoe.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Car park	Car parking & motorhome spaces no. TBC		Glencoe & Glen Etive SCIO have already commissioned design work due to be delivered late February 2022 but project funding is still required.
EV charging points	1		
Motorhome waste unit	1		
Project delivery costs			
Total Cost		£ TBC	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	Glencoe & Glen Etive SCIO in partnership with the Highland Council		
Permissions required	Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	SEPA	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Scottish Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Landowner Lease	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.	
Potential barriers			
Match Funding	HCCF, Highland Council Parking/Loan Arrangement		

Future revenue streams	Parking meters will be introduced into the car park to cover maintenance costs for the car park. Parking charges
Timescale	Design and tendering - 4 Months Construction – 6 Months Completion - 2023

Glen Etive Road End Parking

Project Summary			
The project will create additional parking capacity to the road end in Glen Etive to alleviate ongoing parking pressures.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Car park	10 car parking spaces 5 motorhome spaces	£20,000	
EV charging points	0	0	No suitable power supply
Waste bin compound	1	£3,000	
Project delivery costs		£2,000	
Total Cost		£25,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council		
Permissions required	Planning <input type="checkbox"/> SEPA <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner Lease <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.		
	Planning not required as this project comes under Highland Council permitted development.		
Potential barriers			
Match Funding	Highland Council		
Future revenue streams	Any maintenance will be covered by the Highland Council Roads Department.		
Timescale	Engineering and tender – 3 months Construction – 3 months		

Although considered lower priorities for this hotspot area, some additional projects would be required to provide car parking or sustainable travel solutions on the longer term on some sites. If opportunities arise locally, further projects could be delivered at the following locations:

- Achnambeithach
- Hidden Valley
- An Torr / Signal Rock.

Glen Nevis

Gleann Nibheis

Background

Glen Nevis, perhaps more than any other glen in Scotland, is a place of superlatives. The glen itself wraps around the western and southern sides of the UK's highest mountain – Ben Nevis, while part of the glen – Steall Gorge, is considered the UK's best example of a Himalayan-style gorge. Neighbouring Steall Falls are amongst the highest and most dramatic in the country, and the flanks of the glen contain both the biggest concentration of low-level climbing crags nationally and the final section of Scotland's most popular long-distance trail – the West Highland Way. This is in turn estimated to attract over 1 million visitors to the glen each year, many of them individually or with family and friends, but also as part of numerous organised groups including large charity events.

In many countries, this combination of features would result in the area being designated a National Park, which would result in an allocation of national funds to address the pressures these numbers bring. (For example, both England's and Wales' highest peaks, Scafell Pike and Snowdon, lie in the middle of National Parks and see significant national resources allocated to address visitor pressures).



Upper Glen Nevis

In the case of Glen Nevis, an area that is a major national icon is largely reliant on local resources or the efforts of organisations such as John Muir Trust (who are a landowner), Forestry & Land Scotland and private landowners. The Nevis Landscape Partnership performs an important role in helping coordinate efforts and in seeking funding to undertake projects, but its own lack of a sustainable income stream to cover core costs does limit what can be achieved. Overall, the glen has therefore seen what might be considered enough investment to address the worst issues, but which has been insufficient to offer the world class facilities visitors come to expect in such an iconic location.

While most of the pressures are felt in the main part of the glen running upstream from Fort William as far as Steall Gorge, there are also significant pressures on Ben Nevis itself, both on the so-called "Tourist Route" from Glen Nevis and on the North Face approach starting a little to the north of the glen. The North Face of Ben Nevis is Scotland's premier winter climbing destination with ice routes that are internationally famous, while neighbouring Aonach Mòr is a venue for the UK instalment of the Mountain Bike World Cup circuit – Scotland's only annual world championship standard event in any sport. The former can cause pressures on the North Face Car park, notably on good weather weekends, while the latter brings around 20,000 people to Fort William over a late spring weekend, requiring significant event parking and a temporary park and ride service.

Pressures

The sheer numbers of people visiting Glen Nevis mean that the main issues identified are largely related to parking and related traffic congestion, but limited toilet facilities, particularly at a few key locations, are also an issue, as is wild camping in tents or informal overnighting by motorhomes.

On the east side of the river a single-track road runs for approximately 2km out of Fort William to the road end at Achintee farm where there is parking for around 25 cars. This is a popular start point for walking up Ben Nevis meaning parking spaces are often used for quite long periods with little turnover of vehicles. Although there is a neighbouring pub/restaurant (which has a small amount of additional customer parking), there are no public toilets.

The road on the west side of the river is the main route up the glen. It contains three parking areas in the lower part of the glen:

- the Braveheart car park, which provides access to the forest and forest walks;
- the visitor centre car park, which, with 80 spaces is the largest and the main access point for walking Ben Nevis; and
- roadside parking near the Glen Nevis Youth Hostel, where an adjacent bridge provides an alternative start point for Ben Nevis.

All three car parks are regularly full on good days, and the youth hostel parking which is quite small often sees significant amounts of verge parking stretching along the road.

Of the three sites, only the visitor centre car park has public toilets, and these are heavily used, particularly at weekends. This is exacerbated by large charity groups often arriving by coach which leads to intensive use in a short period before they set off up Ben Nevis. Ben Nevis is commonly visited as part of “3-peaks” events that also involve ascents of Snowdon and Scafell Pike, so it is not unknown for parties to arrive at any time of the day or night. This causes challenges in trying to achieve a balance between overnight closure to protect against vandalism or other issues, while also offering a service to those who arrive outside normal hours.

Further up the road, where the glen and river swing eastwards, there are a number of smaller parking areas, giving access to a variety of walks after which Polldubh is reached. Immediately before the road crosses the Polldubh bridge is the Lower Falls car park. This is the most significant car park in the upper part of the glen used for access to a number of walks including the hills that form the west end of the Mamore ridge – a group of 10 Munros. A small composting toilet was added fairly recently and while this has helped reduce the amount of wild toileting, it is as the only toilet in the upper part of the glen insufficient to cater for the numbers visiting.

After the road crosses the River Nevis it narrows and continues for a further 2 ½ km to the road end, with much of it being unsuitable for larger vehicles. There are a few informal parking areas along this stretch, and the area immediately after the bridge sees frequent verge parking and sometimes the blocking of an agricultural access track. This is partly because the main climbing crags sit immediately above this section of road. Parking on narrow verges and overlapping onto the road can cause congestion and make it difficult for some vehicles to pass. As well as offering parking on each side of the road, the road end area is required to act as a turning area but inconsiderate parking can also make this difficult at times. Nonetheless, the road end can normally accommodate around

50 cars but is often at capacity. As an access point for many popular hills or the upper glen and overnight trips to bothies or wild camping spots, many cars parked here are left for long periods.

Beyond the road end, many people walk through the gorge to visit Steall Falls (a movie location in the Harry Potter films) and indeed many stay overnight, as the flat grassy meadow at Steall is a popular wild camping spot. There are some wild toileting issues reported here and while some is likely due to the number of campers, the situation is not helped by the lack of toilets in the upper part of glen. The wild and relatively unspoilt nature of this area means it is unlikely to be an appropriate location for building toilets, but better provision at the Lower Falls car park and a higher profile for them could help by encouraging more use before people set off into the Steall area.

Evidence

For the past few seasons, Glen Nevis was patrolled by its dedicated team of rangers, employed by the John Muir Trust and the Nevis Landscape Partnership, to engage with visitors as part of patrols, but also to carry out maintenance and conservation activities¹⁰. Over the course of 349 patrols across Glen Nevis between June and October 2021, the Rangers recorded 133 tents and dismantled 92 fire pits – they encouraged visitors to use pre-existing ones which means the marks were not systemically cleared. They also collected 169 litter bags, often from the same particular locations at the Roaring Mill, the Ben Nevis summit shelter and the Red Burn. A total of 200kg of rubbish was carried away from Ben Nevis itself by the Rangers over last season. In addition, they came across 223 instances of toileting on site, that is at least one every two patrols. These were mainly located in the stretch between Paddy's Bridge, upstream from Polldubh and Steall Meadows, and were discovered along with 140 wet wipes.

A visitor survey was carried out by the John Muir Trust Rangers, in addition to the data usually recorded by rangers. It was found that 87% of the visitors were coming to Glen Nevis by car, confirming the background behind the identified parking pressures and road congestion. According to the report, more ranger patrols took place in the Upper Glen alongside their non-visitor management activities, and this is where the most parked cars were counted: a total of 1930 in the Road end car park over the season and 650 in the Lower Falls car park. Fewer patrols took place in the lower glen but Achintee was still identified as an area with parking pressures. While these three car parks were identified as the local hotspots, the figures exclude at least 363 instances of verge parking recorded by the Rangers during last season.



Parking issues and road congestion in Upper Glen Nevis.

¹⁰ Nevis Landscape Partnership & John Muir Trust. Nevis Rangers. End of Season Report 2021.

Previous activity

A little over a decade ago, a significant programme of activity was undertaken by the Nevis Landscape Partnership as part of a Heritage Lottery funded project. As well as environmental and cultural projects, this saw a number of visitor-related projects delivered such as path repairs on Ben Nevis and in the lower areas of the glen. This complemented further investment by partners: new parking at Polldubh, refurbished toilets at the visitor centre and a new bridge across the River Nevis by the Council, as well as path and parking improvements by the then Forestry Commission. However, time and constantly increasing visitor numbers mean even many of those improved facilities are now feeling the strain. Refurbishment and provision of additional capacity are therefore needed.

In 2019, the Highland Council in partnership with the Nevis Landscape Partnership was awarded Rural Tourism Infrastructure Funding to deliver infrastructure improvements at the Lower Falls car park. This project forms one part of a bigger Integrated Infrastructure Strategy (GNIIS) for the glen, which is looking at a number of key visitor issues such as lack of parking/toilets, informal camping, and inadequate signage to name a few.

The project will provide much needed infrastructure improvements at this popular location in the glen by providing a revised car park layout with additional car spaces, new dedicated motorhome spaces, a new toilet facility, dedicated drop-off/pick-up area for public transport, and new linking paths. It is anticipated this project will be complete by the end of 2022.

Project proposal

To address the significant road congestion and parking pressures at the various local hotspots identified above, a number of car park expansions and redesigns are proposed throughout Glen Nevis:

- Achintee: A redesign of the roadside car park is proposed by the Council in the shorter-term, while a larger Achintee Visitor Hub project by the Nevis Landscape Partnership (NLP) would include a longer-term and larger car park expansion nearby.
- Glen Nevis Road End: A Council redesign of this extremely popular and congested car park would allow space for 32 cars and 5 motorhomes.
- Lower Falls: To complement the RTIF project already taking place, the Council is proposing to improve the nearby informal parking. In relation to this, NLP would look to replace the dated Paddy's Bridge to establish better connections between this car park, the road end car park and surrounding paths popular with walkers.
- Nevis Forest: Led by FLS, this project will create much needed event parking for the 2023 UCI World Cycling Championships and other future events.
- North Face car park: FLS are planning an expansion of this car park, as the capacity is not sufficient for the visitors going up Ben Nevis. Feasibility would still be required at this stage.
- Braveheart car park: A joint project between FLS and NLP would include a car park expansion as part of a wider development but would require some feasibility works before progressing.

In parallel to these parking projects, the Highland Council proposes to explore an option where the road to the upper part of the glen would be closed at peak times. Leaving their vehicles in Fort William or possibly further down the glen, visitors could still access the road end via a shuttle bus. A permit system could potentially be used in some cases, mainly to let hillwalkers pass without subjecting them to the risk of coming back late and finding no means of transport back to their vehicle. Peak time restrictions could help not only with parking pressures, but also with issues where larger vehicles try to make their way on the very narrow Upper Glen road. As this would only be envisaged for peak times, car park improvements would still be required at the Road End to cater for visitors the rest of the year. A park and ride system starting from Fort William could also be used, possibly using a low-energy vehicle. This would tie in with wider Fort William bus transport plans and World Cycling Championship legacy (potential multi-use P+R car park at Fort William).

With regards to the outdoor toileting issues and the lack of public toilets in the glen, it is proposed that new facilities are provided, for example at Polldubh as amenities are even scarcer in Upper Glen Nevis.

Other potential pressure-alleviating projects, led by FLS and / or the Nevis Landscape Partnership, also include much needed toilet provision. This is the case with the Braveheart car park project, where showers would also be added, and the Achintee Visitor Hub project, which would also entail visitor information, a ranger station, as well as an interpretive trail and picnic area. In addition, the Nevis Landscape Partnership plans on repairing Ben Nevis Bridge and installing people counters to get a better sense of the carrying capacity throughout the glen.

Glen Nevis Roadside Parking (Achintee)

Project Summary			
Creation of additional roadside parking at the end of the Glen Nevis Road at Achintee to alleviate parking pressure at this popular starting point for Ben Nevis.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Roadside parking	44 car parking & 5 motorhome spaces	£53,600	Indicative plan available ¹¹
EV charging points			No suitable power supply but alternative provision in Fort William (2km).
Improved waste bin compound	1	£3,000	
Bike racks	1	£2,000	
Shelter for public transport	1	£5,000	
Project delivery costs		£6,000	
Total Cost		£66,600	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council		

¹¹ See drawing in [Appendix 1](#).

Permissions required	Planning <input type="checkbox"/>
	SEPA <input type="checkbox"/>
	Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/>
	Landowner Lease <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.
Planning not required as this project falls under Highland Council permitted development.	
Potential barriers	
Match Funding	The Highland Council
Future revenue streams	Any maintenance will be covered by the Highland Council Roads Department.
Timescale	Engineering and tender – 3 months Construction – 3 months Completion - 2023

Glen Nevis Road End Car Park (Steall) / Lower Falls Parking and Bridge Replacement

Project Summary			
<p>The project will reconfigure and improve the existing car park to create additional parking capacity at the road end in Glen Nevis (Steall) to alleviate ongoing parking pressures.</p> <p>While Lower Falls Parking area has already been developed by the Nevis Landscape Partnership, the Highland Council would also like to develop a smaller area of land just outside the main car park that is currently used for informal parking to offer additional capacity in the area.</p> <p>The area also includes a key access bridge that currently needs replaced that provides alternative access to Steall Falls and the Mamores from Lower Falls. This bridge is a vital part of the path network in Glen Nevis, it is part of the Core Path Network, and is extremely well used. If a closure of the last section of road is introduced this will also become part of the walking route to the road end car park and beyond.</p>			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Car park (Steall)	5 motorhome spaces 32 car spaces	£36,352	Indicative plan available ¹²
Car parking area – Lower Falls	Up to 10 vehicles	£8,269	Indicative plan available ¹³
Bridge	1	£81,000	
EV charging points			No suitable location or power supply
Waste bin compounds	2	£6,000	
Bike racks (Steall)	1	2,000	

¹² See drawing in [Appendix 1](#).

¹³ As above.

Shelter for public transport (Steall)	1	5,000	
Project delivery costs		£13,000	
Total Cost		£151,621	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council in Partnership with the Nevis Landscape Partnership		
Permissions required	Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For the Bridge SEPA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For the Bridge Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner Lease <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Picked up as part of Highland Council Core Path Network to retain access. Other <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.		
	Planning not required for the additional parking as this would fall under Highland Council permitted development.		
Potential barriers			
Match Funding	Parking – Highland Council. Bridge – Scottish Mountaineering Trust / Highland Council Core Paths Budget		
Future revenue streams	No sites are expected to create income however it is expected the Highland Council would maintain the Steall and Lower Falls additional parking area and Jahama Estate as local landowner would maintain the bridge in partnership with Nevis Landscape Partnership.		
Timescale	Design and tender – 2-3 Months Construction car park (Steall) 3 Months Construction car park Lower Falls – 2 Months Construction of bridge – 2 Months Completion – 2023		

Event Car Parking Nevis Forest

Project Summary			
Event car parking within Nevis Forest to support 2023 UCI Event, Annual Mountain biking World Cup events and other future events (e.g. Enduro races)			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Car Parking		£162,000	
Project delivery costs		£15,000	
Total Cost		£177,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	Forestry and Land Scotland in partnership with The Highland Council		
Permissions required	Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEPA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

	Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner Lease <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scottish Forestry
Potential barriers	
Match Funding	Forestry and Land Scotland
Future revenue streams	Forestry and Land Scotland will consider charging opportunities with parking to cover expenditure for maintenance
Timescale	Design and Planning 9 Months Complete by 2022 Construction – starting early 2023 Completion – by summer 2023 (UCI event is in August 2023)

Expansion of the North Face Car Park

Project Summary			
Expand and improve the existing Forestry and Land car park at Torlundy used for climbers' access to the North face of Ben Nevis.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Car park	1 expansion	£55,000	Exact number of spaces to be confirmed in design.
Project delivery costs		£3,000	
Total Cost		£58,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	Forestry and Land Scotland in partnership with The Highland Council		
Permissions required	Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEPA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner Lease <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.		
Potential barriers			
Match Funding	Forestry and Land Scotland		
Future revenue streams	Forestry and Land Scotland will consider charging opportunities with parking to cover expenditure for maintenance.		
Timescale	Design and tender – 2 Months Construction – 3 Months Completion – Summer 2024		

Although considered a lower priority for this hotspot area, some additional projects would be required to provide car parking or sustainable travel solutions on the longer term on some sites. If opportunities arise locally, one notable further project could be delivered at Glen Nevis Visitor Centre car park.

Road to the Isles (Glenfinnan to Mallaig)

Rathad nan Eilean (Gleann Fhionnainn gu Malaig)

Background

Historically the “Road to the Isles” took people from Perthshire, across Rannoch Moor and through Lochaber to Skye and beyond. The last section west of Fort William is a major tourism corridor following the A830 trunk road and Fort William to Mallaig railway and it is this section that is today commonly referred to as the Road to the Isles. The accessibility of the area has improved with a major upgrade of the trunk road being completed in 2009 and in part this has led to two distinct areas along the Road to the Isles facing increased tourism pressures.

On the approach from Fort William, the first notable pressure point is Glenfinnan with its dramatic setting below high mountains at the head of Loch Shiel. Glenfinnan was already famous as the location where Bonnie Prince Charlie raised his standard at the beginning of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion, but that fame has been increased yet further through the impressive railway viaduct being a key location in the Harry Potter films. Visits occur throughout the day but there can be notable peaks twice a day from spring to autumn when the Jacobite steam train crosses the viaduct on its way to and from Mallaig. Glenfinnan is also home to a popular National Trust for Scotland (NTS) visitor centre and the NTS also manage the nearby Glenfinnan Monument which commemorates the Jacobite connections.

The second heavily pressured area stretches along the coast from Arisaig to Mallaig with the pressures concentrated around the beaches at Traigh, Camusdarach and the Sands of Morar but also to some extent in Arisaig and Mallaig themselves. This stretch of coast has not only spectacular white sand beaches, but it also has some of the most iconic views to be found on the west coast of Scotland looking out over the islands of Eigg, Rum and Skye. These views were made famous through the film *Local Hero* and even today, approaching 40 years since its release, many visitors are attracted because of its association with the film. The opening of a new section of the A830 road between Arisaig and Morar taking a route further inland has helped the flow of through traffic to and from the village and ferries at Mallaig but the old road (now the B8008) which follows the coast and gives access to the beaches is still well used by visitors.

Mallaig itself is popular with visitors, both as a destination and also as the departure point for a number of ferry routes: as well as the vehicle ferries to Armadale on Skye and Lochboisdale on South Uist, passenger ferries run to the Small Isles (Rum, Eigg, Muck & Canna) and to the Knoydart peninsula which is not accessible from the rest of the mainland by road. Arisaig is also a popular destination and offers boat trips to the Small Isles as well.

Pressures

The majority of the issues around Glenfinnan are parking related despite the recent provision of additional parking through community efforts, supported by RTIF. The new car park operated by the community is able to cope with the volume of cars and motorhomes much of the time, particularly when taken in conjunction with the adjacent NTS visitor centre car park, but at peak times its capacity can be exceeded. Although primarily provided to cater for visitors to the NTS visitor centre and / or the nearby monument, many people still use the NTS car park in order to visit other parts of the village including the viaduct either without, or as well as, visiting the NTS property. In short,

the degree of overlap means it is particularly difficult to define visitors to Glenfinnan as being there to visit only the NTS property, only the wider village or as visitors to both.

The community car park cannot however cater for coaches due to the nature of the access, so virtually all coaches currently use the NTS visitor centre car park to either drop off passengers or to park. A few coaches that are not visiting the NTS visitor centre have also been known to stop on the main carriageway to drop off their passengers which does cause a safety risk even with the speed limit through the village having recently been reduced to 40. The numbers of coaches the NTS is able to accommodate is limited and as not all coaches are coming to visit their property the lack of suitable parking in the village is a notable pressure.

There is no public toilet provision in Glenfinnan at present although toilets are provided in the NTS visitor centre for their customers. Whilst the NTS do allow some usage by other visitors, the current capacity of these means they are unable to cater for all visitors and, being within the centre itself, they are only available during centre opening hours. This can cause pressures at busy times but also during off-season periods when the visitor centre is closed.

Pressures along the B8008 are mainly focussed on the northern half of the route, roughly from Traigh beach to the junction with the A830 where there are issues with parking, wild camping, informal overnight stops by motorhomes, wild toileting and litter – although rangers and additional collections mean litter has been less of an issue more recently. It should also be noted that Arisaig itself does still face some parking challenges. This is due in part to the limited number of spaces available in the more central part of the village but also due to the fact many people leave cars in Arisaig when taking the boat trips that run from Arisaig to the Small Isles.

The parking pressures along the B8008 are evident both during the day and overnight, and while to some extent they follow typical seasonal patterns, they are also influenced by the weather as spells of particularly good weather attract large numbers to what are considered by many to be the best beaches in the area. Formal car parks already exist at Traigh, Curtaig / Camusdarach and at Tougal giving access to Traigh beach, Camusdarach beach and the Sands of Morar respectively, but a number of other smaller roadside parking areas also exist with some created simply through frequent use. When these parking areas are full, vehicles commonly park along the road verge which can cause damage to the environment and disruption to other traffic where the vehicle also extends over part of the carriageway. The effect on the road is described quite adeptly by the Morar community in their seasonal pressures evidence paper produced by the local community council in 2017 “[...] vehicles parked on the roadside and on the verges, effectively turns it into a single track road, but without the benefit of passing places.” At times these obstructions can also be serious enough to obstruct access for emergency vehicles and people walking along the roadway from their vehicle to the beach causes potential safety issues.

Numbers of vehicles are significantly less overnight but both motorhomes and cars belonging to those wild camping in tents can still be found. Obstruction issues are less evident as motorhomes in particular tend to park off the road to get more level parking if people are to sleep in the vehicle, but many are still found in laybys or car parks and some verge parking by cars is still seen. Access to suitable land for dedicated car parks is currently difficult but through the Council’s Visitor Management Plan funds some additional formal roadside parking is being provided during 2022. However, this is not anticipated to provide enough parking for peak times nor is this possible at all locations so some pressures will continue to be seen.

In some cases, overnighing by motorhome users or informal camping in tents is found because recognised sites are full, but there are also those who do this by choice. While some motorhomes have onboard facilities and some tent campers camp close enough to the public toilet at Traigh to use it, many others do not and many spots in the area therefore suffer from wild toileting issues. While wild camping is permitted under the Scottish Outdoor Access Code¹⁴, the behaviour of some campers, camping in large groups, near the road / their vehicle and staying for longer periods of time does not fall within the guidance that wild camping *“is lightweight, done in small numbers and only for two or three nights”* nor does it always fit the guidance on being *“well away from buildings, roads or historic structures”*. While Ranger patrols have helped in terms of educating and advising many campers to reduce what has commonly been referred to as *“dirty camping”*, the cumulative effects still cause environmental, disturbance and waste / health issues.

Away from the coast, some of the same pressures are also felt on the road to Bracora on the north shore of Loch Morar and at the road end, where the capacity of the small parking area is often exceeded. Much of Loch Morar is also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and so considered a sensitive area. As further restrictions are introduced to manage pressures along the coast it is anticipated that some people may be displaced to other areas and so care is required to ensure pressures at Loch Morar are recognised and not exacerbated through displacement.

In Mallaig itself, the pressures are almost entirely related to parking as the new toilets and motorhome waste disposal facilities recently provided have addressed many previous issues. Although significant parking areas do exist in Mallaig, notably at West Bay and East Bay, the sheer numbers that visit Mallaig at busier times exceeds the current capacity and can lead to irresponsible parking on pavements, blocking streets, access etc. A number of residents from the Small Isles and Knoydart, as well as many visitors also tend to leave vehicles in Mallaig when they return to or make day/holiday trips to the islands or Knoydart. Indeed, apart from residents’ vehicles, cars are not permitted on any of the Small Isles and so visitor vehicles left behind while people visit these islands can add to the levels of parking congestion in Mallaig.

The parking issues, particularly in the more central part of the village, also have an impact on pedestrian access, which is well described in the community’s seasonal pressures paper: *“No one can fail to be charmed by the steam train as it rolls into Mallaig but the village is thrown into chaos for a few hours twice a day as crowds of people appear on the streets and the problems associated with parking and the volume of traffic trying to navigate its way around the village, is further complicated by [...] the number of pedestrians”*. Increasing numbers of motorhomes and the increasing size of many of them can exacerbate the problems as few large spaces are available and some vehicles end up having to use multiple spaces to park.

Evidence

Glenfinnan, though distinct from the sites between Arisaig and Mallaig, is the first location most people come to on the Road to the Isles and there is specific evidence of pressures here. The visitor numbers in the area, which have sky-rocketed in the past few years, show the level of pressure experienced locally. According to the Moffat Centre’s Visitor Attraction Monitor, Glenfinnan Monument’s visitor numbers have been multiplied by nearly 2.5 between 2015 (187,437 visitors)

¹⁴Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Camping. Online: <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/practical-guide-all/camping>

and 2019 (462,235 entries), where it became the second in Highland and fifth in Scotland paid-for attraction in terms of frequentation¹⁵.

The community have also documented parking and road congestions issues in details in the evidence report they submitted along with their round 2 RTIF application in 2018. Although the problems have been partially alleviated thanks to the new car park put in place, the Glenfinnan Community Council has expressed in their 2019 consultation response to the Highland Council's Tourism Infrastructure Plan that some parking issues would likely remain – possibly to be solved through a shuttle bus service, as would a need for more public amenities to cater for the high number of visitors, particularly toilets. After works were completed in 2021 and a first full season of evidence gathered from the car park, these needs were confirmed by the National Trust for Scotland who manage the Glenfinnan Monument and Visitor Centre, despite their visitor and coach numbers having reduced with Covid-19.

The Highland Council Access Rangers had a dedicated patrol covering the West Lochaber area over the 2021 season. The data they gathered confirms that informal camping and its impacts are a very significant pressure in the area, more so than anywhere else in Highland.

The Rangers counted a total of 1696 tents, that is, an average of 22 tents per patrol (the Highland average being at 5.6), which is the highest number of all patrol areas. This is also twice as many tents as recorded in the Badenoch & Strathspey area patrolled by the Cairngorms National Park Rangers, which is still recognised as a strongly pressurised area in terms of informal camping. Along with camping in tents, there are a notable number of motorhomes frequenting the area. 2549 motorhomes were seen by the Rangers throughout the season (24 per patrol on average against 16 for the Highland average). Highland-wide, the Road to the Isles is also the second worst area for fire marks, as 412 were recorded (5.4 per patrol against 2.26 for the Highland average). The Rangers also noted 6 instances of motorhome waste found on the roadside, which despite seeming low is actually over the Highland average as well as this is a rarer event.

The sheer number pressure in the area also explains the pressures described above in terms of road congestion and parking problems. 3908 parked cars were recorded in patrol area, with 50.8 seen during a typical patrol – both figures are significantly above the Highland average. 4652 individuals were also counted by the Rangers, averaging 60.4 persons seen per patrol, which makes it the most popular area in Highland in that regard.

This can be partially linked to the ferry figures from Mallaig, which have seen a noticeable growth. In the five years from 2015 to 2019, cars on the Mallaig – Armadale route increased from 54,927 to 75,769 (+38%). Passengers on the services from Mallaig to the Small Isles also rose between that same period from 27,785 to 30,503 (+10%). As cars are not permitted on these islands, all those arriving for this ferry by car are required to leave their car in Mallaig while away.

Within this West Lochaber patrol area, several areas around Traigh Beach, Camusdarach, Morar Sands and Tougal were identified as local hotspots, seeing high visitor numbers and tourism impacts. The below table shows the particularly high level of impacts at Traigh Bay and Morar Sands, and the extent of the situation at the latter site where 1656 cars and 1138 tents have been recorded.

¹⁵ 2020 figures have been purposely excluded due to the impacts specific to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Site Name	No of patrols to location	No of Cars	No of Motorhomes	No of Tents	No of new Fire marks	Toileting on site	No of people seen	No of fires /BBQ put out
Traigh Bay	61	637 (10.4)	746 (12.2)	440 (7.2)	61 (1)	9 (0.1)	1236 (20.3)	3 (0)
Morar Sands/ Tougal	105	1656 (15.8)	448 (4.3)	1138 (10.8)	236 (2.2)	146 (1.4)	2597 (24.7)	19 (0.2)

The figures in the above table are totals from May-October. Average per site visit figures are in brackets.



Mass camping at Tougal Beach/ Sands of Morar on the top left and parking and road congestion issues on the road between Traigh and Tougal.

The following excerpts from the West Lochaber patrol reports give concrete examples of the interlinked camping, parking and traffic pressures highlighted above:

- Bank holiday weekend 28th-30th May:
 “Large amounts of motorhomes, campervans and cars [were] crammed into Traigh Bay and Morar Sands. Most individuals seemed to be behaving. However, it is the cumulative effect of dozens of campervans and cars which restrict emergency access at Morar Sands, making the place feel like a music festival which is impactful on the wildlife and local communities. Similar issues were found at Traigh with motorhomes perched on the verge with sometimes half the vehicle still on the road. Police were contacted on 101 about these issues. There

wasn't much else we felt we could do as Rangers other than speak to everyone. Issue is there isn't anywhere else for people "to go".

- 20th June at Traigh bay: "Land rover parked on machair without the landowner's permission, and unhappy about being asked to move off on to side of road."
- 16th July at Traigh: "2-week camper – As foretold by the land manager this camper has been coming here for several weeks at a time for around 50 years. Unable to move him on despite repeated requests from Rangers and land manager."
- August: "Vandalism – A few occasions where trees and their branches had been cut for firewood. People informed of the legality of this under common law."
- August: "Rubbish – Anecdotal but the Ranger heard of a large stag party being held at Smirisary mid-August, with tents, chairs, sleeping mats and rubbish being abandoned. Commercial sea kayaking groups have gradually removed it, clearing 10 full bin bags and 3 tents."
- 5th September: "Height barrier at Morar Sands car park and Traigh car park bent and damaged."

The Morar Community Council produced an evidence paper in 2017 on the tourism pressures encountered in the area between Arisaig and Mallaig confirming the elements identified above. It also flagged up congestion and parking issues specific to Mallaig, with a lack of spaces available for the number of vehicles, pavements not being wide enough for the number of pedestrians looking at steam train arrivals, and the West and East Bay car parks being popular with motorhomes which unfortunately park across several bays and reinforce existing issues.

Finally, the Road to the Isles was chosen along with three other Highland areas by the Access Ranger team to be the subject of a Location Action Plan, emphasising the significance of the pressures taking place locally. This plan, written by one of the local rangers with a broader visitor management perspective, proposes short-term, middle-term and longer-term solutions to be explored by a partnership of relevant stakeholders.

Previous activity

In 2020, The Highland Council produced its own Visitor Management Plan, outlining current and previous challenges and plans to counteract these over the 2021 season and this approach is being continued in 2022. This multi-service approach, combined with the efforts of a multi-agency group, the "B8008 Working group" has seen improvements across the Road to the Isles area including additional waste collections, a new ranger service, additional roadside parking improvements and better parking enforcement. While this has helped manage some of the pressures, others undoubtedly remain and there are some parts of the infrastructure that are inadequate in relation to the demand, to the extent that additional provision in addition to management activity is required.

Visitor management has also been an increasing issue in Glenfinnan so the Highland Council, working in partnership with the local Glenfinnan Community Facilities SCIO, successfully submitted two applications to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure fund in 2018 and 2019. The first of these was to create a standalone car park for multiple vehicles use and the second to install a bridge over the

river Finnan with linking paths to the viaduct. Both projects are now complete and have made a significant contribution to visitor capacity and safety in the area.

There have also been concerted efforts to address some of the visitor pressures throughout the Road to the Isles, not just through the visitor management activities, but also through new infrastructure. After the report created by the Morar Community Council in 2017 that identified the seasonal tourism pressures in the area, the Highland Council in partnership with the Road to the Isles Facilities Group SCIO applied to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to provide new public toilets in Mallaig, a chemical waste disposal for motorhomes, shower facilities for wild campers, and two new composting toilets for visitors at Traigh beach. Funding was awarded in 2018 and both facilities are now complete and operational for visitor use.

Project proposals

Glenfinnan – While there is a consensus locally around there being limited parking at peak times, lack of suitable coach parking and drop-off / pick-up area for all visitor types and the need for additional public toilet provision, getting a consensus around the most effective solutions has proved more of a challenge. More consultation and potentially further feasibility work will be required before a more detailed project specification could be produced and decisions made on how it might be delivered and by whom. However, a number of possible solutions have been raised by the community and NTS which are given in the table below, along with some of the possible advantages and constraints.

Pressure	Potential solution and advantages	Constraints / issues to be considered
Car parking	Additional on-site car parking	Limited/ no land available nearby. Encourages continued car usage.
	Local overflow parking with Park & Ride service – FLS site at Callop, 2 km east is a possible location. Land is already in public ownership. Location is before Glenfinnan on main approach and use could be promoted through variable message signs. Frequency and shuttle bus costs are more reasonable over shorter routes.	Potential conflict with forestry operations unless additional paths provided. Proximity could lead to visitors attempting to walk along A830. Less convenient for visitors arriving from the west.
	Park & ride service from Fort William. Reduces cars on A830. Could tie in with wider Fort William bus transport plans and World Cycling Championship legacy (potential multi-use P+R car park at Fort William).	Would need more significant promotion to avoid people driving anyway. Not convenient for visitors arriving from the west.
Coach parking	Reconfigure NTS car park to remove coach parking and create drop-off area with coaches then parked remotely (e.g. Callop).	Disconnects drivers from their passengers. More difficult for drivers to access toilets / refreshments.

	Brings all coach visitors to a central and safe location off the main A830. Relatively easy to deliver if land available. Opportunity for a booking system to help with management.	Some site management at remote location may be required to guarantee access. Funding options may be limited as NTS car park is not publicly owned.
Public Toilets	Enhance / extend NTS toilet provision (already proposed).	Availability still limited by opening hours. Operating costs of a public facility are imposed on a single commercial operator.
	New standalone toilets – potentially near/ between NTS and community car parks so easily accessible to all. Fewer constraints on opening times. Costs could be shared and / or linked to parking charges.	Would require land acquisition. Would need agreement over future ownership/management/ maintenance before investment could be made.

Arisaig / Morar / Mallaig area – It has been identified for a number of years that this section of the Road to the Isles is in need of a co-ordinated approach to visitor management – ideally with an “emergency plan” type response easily deployable at busy times. The main proposal here is for a package of measures designed to address the parking issues on the B8008 between Traigh and Morar while also supporting use of public transport and encouraging active travel. In so doing, the proposal is also expected to address some informal motorhome and tent camping issues.

While some elements of the proposal include additional parking, the proposed developments also allow visitors to use the existing train service to Morar or the existing bus services along the A830 and walk or cycle to some of the closer beaches. However, the longer-term ambition is to provide a park and ride service at peak times, most likely from a dedicated start point near Arisaig to catch traffic approaching from Fort William – although a site still has to be identified and land may need to be purchased. This proposal does however include the infrastructure required to allow any future service as well as other buses such as tour buses to stop at the main parking areas that already exist.

B8008 Parking and Traffic Management

Project Summary			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Car park extension at Camusdarach	59 spaces	£84,534	
Roadside parking - Traigh	45 spaces	£91,961	
Associated traffic management works	3 VMS	£48,000	Variable message signs, verge works, bunding etc, parking meters.

Bracora road end parking	15 spaces		
Waste bin compounds	3	£9,000	
Walking / cycling route from A830 Morar junction to Tougal	750m	£17,475	
Additional paths connecting parking / beaches	800m	£18,640	
Bike racks	4	£8,000	2 each at Tougal & Camusdarach
Park and ride car park at Arisaig			Site yet to be identified so not yet costed. Later phase of project.
Shelters for public transport	4	£20,000	Arisaig, Traigh, Camusdarach, Tougal
Project delivery costs		£29,000	
Total Cost		£326,610	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council		
Permissions required	Planning <input type="checkbox"/> SEPA <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner Lease <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.		
	Planning not required as this project comes under Highland Council permitted development.		
Potential barriers			
Match Funding	Highland Council		
Future revenue streams	Parking meters will be introduced at the key sites along the B8008 route. Income will be used to maintain the sites along the route.		
Timescale	Design and tender 8 Months Construction – 12 – 16 Months Completion - 2023/2024		



Kayaks on Traigh Beach

Isle of Skye

An t-Eilean Sgitheanach

Background

Although the Isle of Skye has long been a popular tourist destination, it has seen a notable increase in numbers in recent years as well as changes in visitor patterns. In particular there has been a move away from the longer-term stays once common to shorter stays. In part this reflects trends nationally, but on Skye this is exacerbated by increasing numbers being directed via social media to quickly “tick off” specific sites which are promoted as the top places to visit. The rise of backpacker type tours of Scotland which spend short periods of time at one location and even frequent day trips to Skye from places such as Inverness has also put increasing pressure on certain sites.

Overnight stays do however remain popular - a recent study by the Scottish Government into short-term rentals showed that Skye had the highest proportion of its housing stock used in this way when compared to the rest of Scotland. There has also been a noticeable rise in the number of motorhomes visiting Skye with many of these also overnighing informally in car parks and laybys particularly on some of the minor roads.

Recent years have also seen Skye well featured in a number of movies and TV series such as MacBeth, Transformers, The Witcher and SAS: Who Dares Wins. During the pandemic, period film activity continued and limitations on travel overseas appeared to lead to an increased interest in filming UK travel related programmes such as Darcey Bussell's Wild Coasts of Scotland and Extraordinary Escapes with Sandi Toksvig which is expected to encourage more domestic visits.

Pressures

Not all areas of Skye face the same pressures, but a few areas have stood out in recent years as particular pressure points – many of these being well documented¹⁶, even before the more recent pandemic-related influx of domestic visitors. The Trotternish peninsula north of Portree has the greatest concentration of pressure points including in particular 4 sites: -

- The Storr
- The Quiraing
- Kilt Rock
- Fairy Glen, Uig

However, new sites in this area are becoming more popular as well, with Brothers’ Point on the east coast and Rubha Hunish at the northern tip being good examples of this. Other areas of the island also contain some notable pressure points such as: -

- Neist Point
- Coral Beach, Dunvegan
- Portree (particularly around the harbour, in Somerled Square and at Bayfield)

¹⁶ Carrell, Severin. Skye islanders call for help with overcrowding after tourism surge. The Guardian. 09.08.2017. Online: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/aug/09/skye-islanders-call-for-help-with-overcrowding-after-tourism-surge>

- Sligachan (where the traditional walkers car park now also seeing more short stops to visit Sligachan bridge & the Mackenzie statue. Now a popular “selfie” spot)
- Glen Brittle (including the Fairy Pools but also the lower glen and the road end / beach area)
- Broadford
- Elgol

At all of the locations described parking has been the major issue. At some of the sites previous or current projects are addressing some of the problems, but others still require additional parking to be provided and virtually all locations could benefit from improved public transport infrastructure to allow either better use of existing public transport services or for new services / park and ride services to be provided.

Public toilet provision has also been improved in recent years as described below, but some pressures remain and at some locations are becoming worse due to increases in the numbers wild camping in tents. Some additional or improved provision is therefore still required. Most notably, the current public toilets in Portree are inadequate having been designed for substantially lower numbers than are currently using the facilities. The problems here are particularly acute when cruise ships visit as the numbers in the village at any one time can increase markedly. In a similar way, the public toilets in Broadford and Dunvegan are small and quite dated so fail to offer a good quality facility at a key destination. Local proposals for replacement of the Broadford toilets do exist but the need is included in this plan as delivery of that project is not yet certain. The road beyond Dunvegan to Glendale and on towards Neist Point – a distance of 17 km currently has no public toilet provision although some businesses with facilities for customers do exist.

The increase in the number of motorhomes, along with the propensity of many to stay in places other than formal campsites, has led to an increased need for motorhome waste facilities. Again, provision has improved in recent years and more projects are under way, but there is still an ambition to have a wider network of publicly provided facilities as some locations still rely on commercial campsites offering their facilities to non-residents. Some demand also exists for additional formal stopover sites to reduce the pressures on some popular informally used locations and consideration could be given to some of the proposed parking developments that are proposed including this.

With the reopening of the community-run Raasay House and a new distillery on the island, there has also been an increase in visitors to Raasay in recent years. While Raasay itself does not currently appear to be a significant pressure point, many visitors leave their car or motorhome at Sconser on Skye and travel on the Raasay ferry on foot or with bikes as many of the island’s attractions are easily reached from the ferry terminal. This in turn creates some pressures on parking at Sconser with the current car park not always having capacity.

Evidence

The Isle of Skye was covered by two distinct Access Ranger patrols due to the expanse of the area needing covered: the North Skye and South Skye patrol areas, roughly separated by a line mid-way between Portree and Sligachan. The data provided generally shows that Skye is around or below the Highland average for the number of tents (1012), fire marks (350), litter bags (540 quarter bags) and outdoor toileting instances (121). This is perhaps due to the fact that a lot more patrols were carried out were on Skye compared to other areas of Highland. It is also expected that the Rangers

are spending less time at some of the busiest sites of the island, which have already seen infrastructure investment, and are instead devoting more time to smaller locations which are however becoming increasingly popular. These will commonly have much lower carrying capacity so pressures can still be significant.

The Access Rangers' data still clearly shows that the Isle of Skye is welcoming high numbers of visitors, which continue to impact on the levels of road congestion and parking issues on the island. In the North and South patrol areas respectively, 4750 and 5785 parked cars were recorded throughout the 2021 season. A typical patrol would encounter around 37 cars, which is above the Highland average. North Skye in particular is also above average for the number of people seen by the Rangers (4519 total or 34.8 per patrol). Respectively 1989 and 2549 motorhomes were noted by the Rangers for North and South Skye, with around 16 such vehicles per patrol overall. Motorhome waste found on the roadsides was especially concerning for this area with 14 occurrences for the island, making it one of the most affected areas of Highland. In addition, the Isle of Skye was by far the area where the most parking notices were distributed, with 35 and 71 for North and South Skye respectively - which is significantly above the Highland average (16 per patrol area).

In the Sconser area, parking problems are also substantially affected by the ferry passengers leaving their cars when going to Raasay. Between 2015 and 2019, the numbers have increased from 60,261 to 88,238 passengers – a growth of 46% which impacts further on the parking situation in Sconser.

Over the course of their patrols, the Access Rangers have identified a number of local hotspots for their areas. The following sites were the ones busiest on visits and which were therefore checked more often. For North Skye:

- The area between Dunvegan and Claigan, which comprises the road itself, Claigan village and Coral Beach.
- Neist Point
- The Staffin Slip
- Old Man of Storr
- Quiraing
- Kilt Rock
- Upper Tote.

The locations below were the busiest ones on the patrols in South Skye and as a result the ones which were most monitored. This reflects the trend that sees smaller sites getting increasingly popular:

- Square Mile Forest car park in Glen Brittle
- Fairy Pools
- Glen Brittle bridge and flats
- Sligachan West / Drynoch East
- The Torrinn to Blà Bheinn section of the B8083
- Talisker Road End.

While these locations have been identified as busy by Rangers, not all of them will be taken forward as priorities within this plan, as some will require management or more minor improvement works rather than more significant infrastructure investment.

Glen Brittle was identified as a sensitive and significantly affected location by the Access Rangers. Indeed, it was one of four locations Highland-wide where the local Access Ranger was retained over winter 2021-2022 to produce a Location Action Plan to help plan future visitor management locally. The Fairy Pools is undoubtedly the busiest site within the area, with 360,839 visitors recorded by the people counter in 2019. This is a dramatic increase since 2014 (134,125 visitors, 269% increase), but even more so since 2002 (26,479 visitors, 1,363% increase). Tourism pressures have been alleviated by the previous RTIF projects, but other pressures are widespread through the entirety of the glen and still impact on residents. Whilst this can be difficult to quantify, a case study of problems and direct costs incurred by the Glen Brittle Farm has been carried out¹⁷. It concluded that the farm loses £3085 each year, mainly due to having to spend time tidying up after campers and talking to visitors about improper parking, but also for other reasons such as dog attacks causing sheep worry and therefore reduced reproduction.

Further evidence of tourism pressures can be gained from comments in the Ranger patrol reports. The excerpts listed below confirm the variety of issues encountered on Skye, from camping impacts to extreme road congestion:

- June - Ord: “One car used for sleeping had note from local resident on windscreen and bag of human toileting waste.”
- June – Coral Beach: “Site was above capacity and people got stuck while turning around. People complained that there was not enough capacity. I turned around a few cars to avoid a gridlock and spoke to various members of the public who were disappointed that they could not find a space to park. The situation got slightly better and I eventually left, telling visitors in oncoming vehicles in passing places that I would recommend for them to turn around. “
- July - Dunvegan to Claigan: “Multiple cars and campervans [...] were parked in passing places and set up for the night. Within my patrol area this seems to be mainly a problem here, with many of the passing places not having signs attached to the signposts anymore. Throughout July, I had to move cars every single time I drove down the road.”
- August – Claigan: “Site remained beyond capacity throughout August with [Ranger] turning around arriving people to avoid gridlocks. Very few problems with campers [...], but parking has remained a real issue between 10:30/11:00 and 19:00/19:30.”
- August: Chat with Neist Point locals “concerned about widespread toileting issues (all over the area) [...] [and] issues at Meanish Pier with campers emptying their tanks into the sea.”
- 8th August – Near Glen Brittle Bridge: “Medium/large fire in fire ring with large flames and prominent plume of smoke had been left burning unattended. [...] Doused fire with water from nearby river. Continued to pull logs, plastic, cutlery and food out of the fire.”
- 21st August – Glasnakille Roadside: “Messy encampment with fire going well [...]. No-one around. Shouted. No response [...]. Extinguished fire. Left note on windscreen of small sports car warning not to leave unattended fire and cattle regularly walk through this site.”

¹⁷ SkyeConnect. Scottish Agricultural College Consulting. Public Goods Funding from Public Donations Report. 2021.

- September: Talk with local museum employee who “reported that she ha[d] found instances of motorhome waste disposal around Staffin beach.”



On the left, a large, abandoned campsite by the road at Sligachan. On the right, a car stuck on the single-track road to Fairy Glen.

Previous activity

Because the Isle of Skye is known as one of the top destinations to visit in Scotland the island has already seen a significant amount of visitor infrastructure improvements, although there are still several outstanding popular sites on the island that require development.

The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund has been a major factor in supporting much needed visitor infrastructure across the island with nine sites to date benefitting from the fund.

1. Old Man of Storr: Visitor facilities and paths
2. Fairy Pools: Car parking and toilets
3. Blà Bheinn: Composting toilets and car parking
4. Bayfield, Portree: Parking improvements
5. Neist Point, Lighthouse: Car parking
6. Elgol: Toilets, motorhome facilities and parking
7. Sleat: Campervan facilities
8. Duisdale: Motorhome aire
9. Kilmuir, Trotternish Peninsula: Toilets, parking and motorhome facilities

The first five of these projects are now complete with the last four expected to be delivered by 2023.

The Highland Council Roads Teams have been working closely with the Scottish Government as a major local landowner to increase provision at some key hotspot destinations on Skye including the Quiraing, the Fairy Glen at Uig, and Coral Beach at Dunvegan by increasing parking provision at all three sites. In August 2021, the Highland Council also announced the contract award for the upgrade of Uig ferry terminal in late 2022 which will improve ferry service provision and provide a safer enhanced experience for all ferry and harbour users both now and into the future. This project may also alter the parking arrangements in Uig that could in future offer opportunities for a park and ride service from the village to the Fairy Glen.

Skye has also seen the benefits of the Highland Council’s 2021 Visitor Management Plan. Two Access Rangers, deployed in partnership with Skye Connect, promoted responsible visitor behaviour across

the island. Two new public toilet Comfort Schemes were also introduced at Kyleakin and Glendale as part of the plan, and the frequency of waste collections was increased in areas of high visitor numbers such as Portree or in laybys impacted by nearby informal camping. The plan and related funding also supported additional public transport provision with enhancements and extensions to existing services over the summer school holiday period, providing five daily return journeys on weekdays between Portree and the Old Man of Storr, Fairy Pools and Fairy Glen.



View along the Trotternish ridge from the Quiraing

Project proposal

The main proposal here is for a series of smaller measures designed to address a number of parking issues at some of the emerging pressure points – which would in turn address some informal motorhome and tent camping issues. This also includes addressing the previously identified parking upgrade at Kilt Rock – considered the last of the major pressure points on Skye yet to be tackled.

The project also proposes including public transport / park-and-ride service infrastructure at those sites and retrofitting these at other sites. This is intended to make those locations more suitable for use by existing public transport services, but also to prepare them for proposed future public transport improvements such as a park-and-ride service around Trotternish from Portree. In the case of the Fairy Glen, shelters are proposed at the start of the road to allow those on bus services along the main road to be dropped off to walk to the Fairy Glen, as well as at the new parking area further up the glen to cater for a future peak-time shuttle bus service from Uig. Further sensors connecting to variable message signs will also be added so as to link in with the SkyeConnect project that will give advance warning to visitors as to which sites are busy and where there is capacity.

Further public toilet provision is proposed for Portree in the longer term with more immediate refurbishments proposed by the Council in Dunvegan and by the community trust in Broadford.

Although further provision for motorhome stopovers has been identified as a need, the Council's preferred option at this time is that these are primarily provided by the private sector or communities (with 3 currently being provided through RTIF funding). No additional dedicated sites are therefore proposed in this plan.

Visitor car park and public transport improvements

Project Summary			
Enhanced car parking at five popular rural visitor locations across Skye and public transport facilities at these and some existing car parks. One project (Sligachan) also includes additional interpretation and path works to improve access to the old Sligachan Bridge.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Kilt Rock car park and service bus provision	52 car & 6 motorhome spaces	£200,000	Revision of previous unsuccessful RTIF proposal.
Glen Brittle road end car park	15	£30,000	Reconfigure and extend parking.
Sligachan car park	1	£200,000	JMT project near hotel to offer bridge / mountain access.
Brothers' Point layby	8 spaces	£16,000	Create new parking layby.
Elgol car park improvements	1	£3,000	Minor realignment and signage to manage use / avoid conflict with slipway users.
Sconser	1		Expected to be more of a medium-term project
EV charging points	1	£30,000	Possible at Sligachan. Other sites unsuitable
Bike racks	3	£6,000	Kilt Rock, Glen Brittle and Fairy Glen
Shelters for public transport / shuttle services	8	£40,000	New provision at Kilt Rock, Storr, Flodigarry (Quiraing), Duntulm / Rubha Hunish, Fairy Glen, Glen Brittle and Elgol. Sligachan & Sconser shelters already exist.
Sensors and Variable message signs	5 of each?	£20,000	Provided to give visitors real-time information on busy sites
Project delivery costs		£55,000	
Total Cost		£610,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council / John Muir Trust (Sligachan)		
Permissions required	Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	SEPA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Scottish Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Landowner Lease	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
Potential barriers	Land availability at Sconser may be limited		
Match Funding	Highland Council		
Future revenue streams	Parking charges at some sites		
Timescale	Design and tender – Various Phases over 2023/23 Project delivery – Various Phases over 2023/24		

Dunvegan Public Toilet Upgrade

Project Summary			
Upgrade to Dunvegan public toilets: replacing urinals, WCs and seats, sinks and units underneath, cubicle walls, new flooring, new covered heaters, painting inside and outside.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Toilet upgrade		£100,000	
Project delivery costs		£10,000	
Total Cost		£110,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council		
Permissions required None Required	Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	SEPA	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Scottish Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Landowner Lease	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.	
Potential barriers			
Match Funding	Highland Council		
Future revenue streams	Highland Council will make small charges for facilities across Highland to cover maintenance costs of all toilet properties.		
Timescale	Tender - 2 months Construction - 4 - 6 months Project delivery - 2023		

Bayfield Car Park Expansion and Toilets

Project Summary			
Further phases to provide additional car parking and new public toilets at Bayfield car park, Portree.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Car park	1	£420,000	Project being proposed / developed by Portree & Braes Community Trust for the medium term. Costs not yet identified.
New public toilets		£180,000	
Bike racks	2	£4,000	
Park & ride infrastructure	1	Included in costs above	
Project delivery costs		Included in costs above	
Total Cost		£600,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	Portree and Braes Trust		
Permissions required	Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	SEPA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Scottish Water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Landowner Lease	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.	
Potential barriers	Land / building acquisition		

	Technical challenges as land reclamation involved in parking element
Match Funding	TBC
Future revenue streams	Car park and toilets anticipated to be charged for
Timescale	Project design - March 2022-2023 Permissions, surveys etc - March 2023-2024 Project delivery – 2025-2026

Although considered lower priorities for this hotspot area, some additional projects would be required to provide car parking or sustainable travel solutions on the longer term on some sites. If opportunities arise locally, further projects could be delivered at the following locations:

- Aird of Sleat Road End
- Armadale Pier
- Duntulm Castle access
- Camasunary Path at Kilmarie
- Ord / Tokavaig
- Ullinish Road End
- Talisker Bay Road End
- Tarskavaig
- Edinbane village
- Raasay Pier: extra-lane for ferry queuing
- Kylerhea: Wildlife hide replacement and access road improvements.

There may also be a need to provide public toilets on the road to Neist Point but before a new build is considered options for a further Highland Comfort Scheme should be explored.

Applecross

A' Chomraich

Background

The Applecross peninsula is one of the more remote parts of Highland with its main settlement – the village of Applecross being accessed either by the Bealach na Bà (which is the highest road climb in the UK – with an ascent of 2054ft or 626m from the start at sea level to the summit), or via the longer winding coast road from Shieldaig on Loch Torridon to the north.

Despite this, the village has become very popular in recent years – in part due to the attraction of being remote and the profile of the Bealach na Bà as a classic route, but also due to the North Coast 500. Indeed, the Applecross peninsula is arguably the most iconic stretch of the NC500 with marketing materials, motoring magazines, TV programmes and visitor posts frequently featuring dramatic sections of the road or the views from it. It is also popular with cyclists who come specifically for the challenge of riding the road because of its unique status. In the book *100 Greatest Cycling Climbs*, author Simon Warren scores the Bealach na Bà climb as 11/10 for difficulty and describes it as: “This is it: the Holy Grail”. In a similar way the road is also increasingly popular with motorcyclists including those travelling in groups.

All of this has resulted in Applecross being considered one of the essential stops for people on the NC500 or simply visiting the area. Many will stop in the village itself to make use of local facilities or businesses, or just for a relaxing walk and to take in the views which are themselves spectacular. Others will spread further round the bay, often stopping for a picnic, to visit the beach or for walks and views, but increasing numbers have also started to use this area for overnight stops – either in motorhomes or wild camping in tents. Although most activity is seen around Applecross bay, some other spots are also popular – notably Toscaig at the road end to the south and near the beach at Sand, 8 km north of the village. This was the location for the popular BBC series “Monty Halls Great Escape” and still attracts visitors who come to see the filming locations.

Pressures

Across the whole peninsula there are some pressures most notably around levels of traffic and the size of vehicles (large motorhomes) on narrow roads and the numbers of motorhomes informally camping overnight. The Applecross Bay, Toscaig and Sand are particular locations where this is frequently seen.

However, the majority of the more intense pressures are felt in the village of Applecross or spread around the bay from the village / Shore Street. Notable pressures here are: -

- Traffic levels and some difficulties passing large vehicles on the Bealach na Bà. Some instances of large vehicles becoming “stuck” trying to negotiate the hairpins near the summit.
- Traffic congestion on Shore Street in Applecross – in part caused by additional visitor parking when the nearby car parks are full. With most of the street being formed of traditional cottages, many properties have no driveways and on-street parking of residents’ vehicles is therefore already common. Additional visitor parking and traffic can therefore cause congestion on this fairly narrow street. Issues also arise with vehicles having to continue past

the congested area by the Applecross Inn to turn and this turning often takes place in inappropriate locations (passing places, cattle grid etc).

- The community-run public toilets in Applecross are the only ones on the peninsula and these can be overwhelmed at peak times.
- Informal motorhome camping in the surrounding area – mostly located across the bay from the village. As well as taking place in laybys and parking areas, many also drive onto the grass causing environmental damage.
- Wild camping – again mostly focussed on the area stretching around across the bay from the village.
- Waste issues – the last three pressures also contribute to a range of waste problems, ranging from littering and illegal disposal of motorhome waste to wild toileting, with the latter being considered by the community as by far the most significant visitor pressure. This was a particular problem in 2020 and, while less of an issue in 2021 when further visitor management measures including the employment of access rangers were introduced, some pressures remain. With the fact that the worst issues still occur away from where the toilets are located and since rangers cannot be on site all the time, a more permanent solution is still required.

Evidence

Due to tourism pressures faced by the Applecross community, which are felt by many to be overwhelming, local groups have organised themselves to deal with the situation. There is a dedicated Tourism Subgroup to the Applecross Community Council and though its members might not agree with the solutions to take forward, they all tend to agree on the pressures described above. The very mediatised discussion within the community about asking the North Coast 500 to swap their main and secondary itineraries around the peninsula to help decrease the number of visitors who simply pass through is another example showing the significance of the impacts on the residents. Traditionally, as a relatively remote location Applecross tended to see visitors coming for longer stays.

The South Wester Ross Ranger patrol area, which mainly covered the Applecross peninsula, but also some other settlements beyond it, is named in the Seasonal Access Rangers Report Annual Report 2021 as one of those struggling the most with informal camping. The number of tents, fire marks and outdoor toileting occurrences were all above the Highland average: 5.9 tents per patrol (675 in total), 2.4 fire marks per patrol (276 in total) and 3 instances of outdoor toileting per patrol (344 in total).

The Ranger also identified Applecross bay and the Applecross junction as some of the busiest sites on patrol, the bay in particular being the most popular location. In July 2021 alone, the Ranger observed 550 parked cars, 243 motorhomes, 206 tents and 25 new fire marks around Applecross bay, while the area's other busiest locations mentioned in the monthly report do not come close to those numbers (Glen Torridon: 90 cars, 40 motorhomes, 40 tents and 20 new fire marks).

The following entries in the Access Ranger's report confirm the issues regarding parking, camping and outdoor toileting, as well as the use of fires:

- 24th July: "Young Irish "boy racers" dumped £200 "banger" car at Applecross Heritage Centre location adjacent to Applecross Trust designated camping area."

- 26th July: “Allegedly 3 motorbikes involved in arson on dumped car above. Fortunately, the Ranger had cordoned off car park which would otherwise have been full of overnight campers and cars. He reported this to Police, but no action was taken. Community arranged removal of vehicle with local scrap dealer.”
- 25th July: “Tensions are becoming heightened after a series of escalating incidents which have one common location: the unmanaged [...] camping area at the head of Applecross bay.”
- September: Following a report, the Ranger visited a location near Ardheslaig where he found “a heavily used encampment and site littered with human excrement and toilet paper including multiple rolls. There was also an adapted camping chair that had been used for the purpose of defecating.”
- September: The Ranger had discussions with locals around “traffic flow and parking issues in and around the road junction to Milton”. “The Council car park [there] is often full in peak hours around lunch and dinner times at the Applecross Inn. This has a knock-on effect to the Inn’s own car park.”
- November (off-season visit): The Ranger had to rake and compost 40 fire pits across the Applecross Bay with seaweed.



The left-hand picture shows the camping activity taking place at the north side of the bay and the damage left by a line of fire pits despite the sign advising against it. The right-hand one is an example of a larger vehicle getting stuck on the Bealach na Bà road.

Along with one of the pictures above depicting common difficulties resulting in road congestion on the Bealach na Bà road, it is worth adding that motorcycle numbers counted by the Rangers were considerably higher in the Applecross area than anywhere else in Highland. 455 motorcyclists were recorded over the course of the season, while the second most popular patrol area only logged 165.

Previous activity

There have already been some important improvements made in the Applecross area to reduce pressures on the community and improve the visitor experience. In 2018, The Highland Council was

awarded Rural Tourism Infrastructure Funding to install five enhanced parking viewpoints on the 18km section of road over the Bealach na Bà, famous for its gradients and hairpin bends. These viewpoints are now in place offering improved stopping points for visitors travelling over the pass and have also helped reduce congestion problems on this popular route. As the road is not advised for learner drivers, or larger vehicles such as caravans or motorhomes, updated signage has also been installed and encourages these vehicles to take an alternative low-level route via Shieldaig.

The Highland Council has also carried out additional waste collections in the Applecross area in 2021, made possible through dedicated Highland Council Visitor Management Plan funding, which has helped reduce waste issues. In addition, the Council has looked at rolling out an electric vehicle charging point in the village, but this project had to be set aside due to the difficulties encountered.

Furthermore, a lot of effort is being undertaken locally with the community public toilets recently upgraded and a steady flow of charging income now being used to support this facility. The community are also looking at car parking solutions for Shore Street and have proposed an official unmanaged camping area in the Applecross bay, a popular spot for wild camping. Directional and informative signage has also been erected during summer 2021 by the Applecross Trust to discourage littering, outdoor toileting and advise on the no-fire policy across the bay. Combined with the Ranger's efforts, who re-directed visitors parking and camping at inappropriate locations towards a list of suitable locations put together by the community, these temporary measures have made the situation more manageable but have not entirely resolved the pressures.

Project proposal

Through different events the views of the local community have been sought by the community council and Applecross Community Company but while there is general agreement on the pressures (matching those described above), there are differing views on the solutions. Some people tend to favour improving provision to cater for the increased demand, while others would prefer to see more enforcement or measures to limit numbers. Applecross is also home to a reasonably sized campsite which is one of the key businesses in the community. Both the Council and many in the community therefore recognise the need for any solutions regarding motorhomes and / or tents to take into account possible impacts on this business.

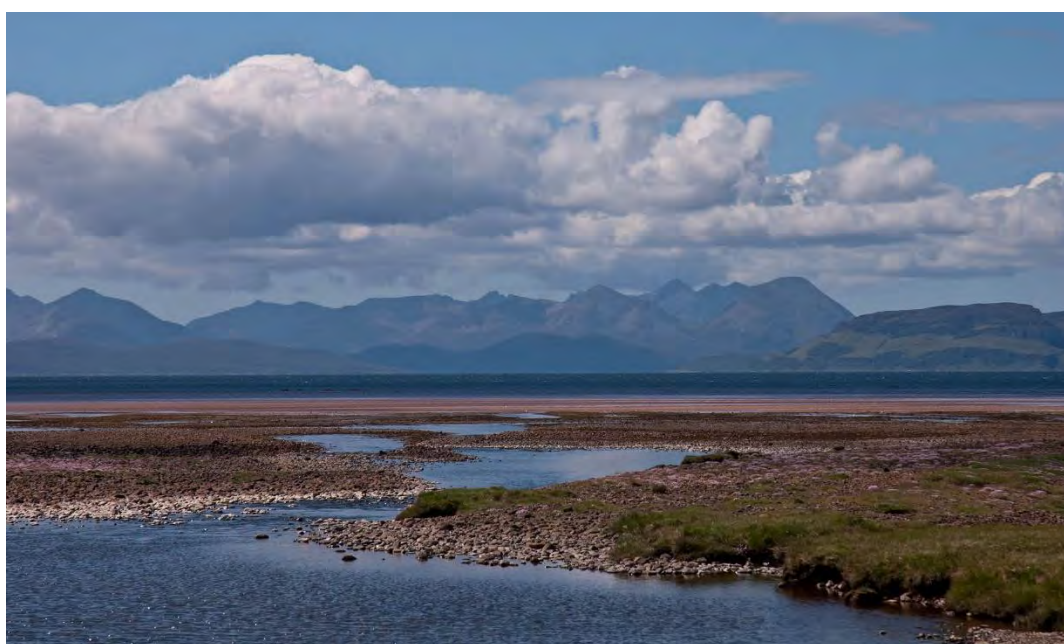
Parking in the village itself is now felt to be manageable with the access ranger's help but as there is no guarantee of longer-term funding for rangers, a more permanent solution is likely to be required. While not an immediate priority as further details would still have to be discussed in consultation with the community, it is expected that some additional parking provision may become a priority in the slightly longer term. Improvements to the parking area at Sand to the north are therefore the only parking improvement proposed in the short term.

The one initiative that has the broadest support is the provision of an "aire" or hard standing somewhere around the bay, as the community felt that designated facilities with a chemical waste unit would help with informal motorhome camping and some of the waste issues. There was a strong view however that these facilities should be paid for so as to avoid undue competition with the campsite and to raise income for the community to cover management costs. The community company and the Applecross Trust, the local landowners, have started negotiations on the feasibility of this.

No consensus has been reached on toilet improvements or whether additional toilet facilities to take the pressure off the existing overused facilities in the village may be required so a further public toilet proposal may be put forward in future.

Although a precise specification has not yet been produced, an indication of what this project might involve is given below and the Council would seek to work with the community to develop plans further before seeking any additional design funding

Project Summary			
Motorhome stopover site			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Motorhome parking area with electricity / water services	Overnight parking for 10 Motorhomes	£120,000	Details not yet agreed by community – scale / costs included are indicative only.
Project delivery costs		£12,000	
Total Cost		£132,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	Applecross Community Company / Applecross Trust		
Permissions required	Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	SEPA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Scottish Water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Landowner Lease	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
Potential barriers	Access to suitable services / utilities		
Match Funding	Applecross Community Company, Coastal Communities Fund		
Future revenue streams	Commercially operated site with fees for overnight use		
Timescale	Site finalised / legal agreement / planning etc – 9 months Construction – 3 months Project delivery - 2023		



Applecross Bay

North West Highlands (Loch Broom to Durness)

Iar-Thuath na Gàidhealtachd (Loch Bhraoin gu Diùranais)

Background

The North Coast 500 has been one of Scottish Tourism's success stories in the last 5 to 6 years, but this has also brought with it pressures at certain locations. Although many people will complete the route in its entirety, the amount of time people spend on different parts of the route varies and anecdotal evidence suggests this is quite heavily biased towards the west coast part of the route. Along with Applecross, identified as a separate hotspot in this plan, the other areas facing the greatest pressures are mainly found in the stretch from roughly Braemore junction, south of Ullapool, to just east of Durness and this is classed as the North West Highlands for the purpose of this plan. Much of this corresponds with the boundaries of the North West Highland Geopark, which while not a dedicated tourism organisation, is closely involved in local tourism and visitor management.

Of course, not all visitors to the area are travelling the North Coast 500 and many locations in the area were previously, and still remain, popular with visitors coming for other reasons including spending their whole holiday in the area. At the southern end of the area and little over an hour from Inverness, Ullapool is the busiest destination in the area. Although with a population of less than 2,000, its importance as the port for the main ferry to the Hebrides, its popularity as a holiday destination and as a day trip destination from the Inner Moray Firth area (from where both residents and visitors come) mean it is the only settlement that comes close to being an "urban" area. Once beyond Ullapool, all other communities are not only more remote and smaller but also tend to be much more scattered as is the norm in crofting communities. Visitor numbers can vastly exceed the number of residents, so carrying capacities can be less and impacts are felt in a different way.

Road conditions in the area are fairly unique. While stretches of single-track road can be found in many parts of Highland and many roads branching off the main routes can be single track, there are few areas in Highland where a single-track road is still the main through route. The exception to this is the North West Highlands, and while twin-track road does extend northwards from Ullapool to Rhiconich, the next 55 km through Durness and on to Hope near Tongue (all of it forming part of the NC500) is almost entirely single-track road. Further south an alternative twin-track route between Lochinver and Kylesku does exist but those following the NC500 tend to follow the coastal route through Drumbeg – another stretch of almost 40 km on entirely single-track road.

Pressures

Due to the nature of the road network, one of the biggest tourism pressures felt by local residents is congestion on the roads. This is clearly not a tourism specific issue, but it is notable that the area is seeing larger numbers of motorhomes, motorhomes that are themselves becoming larger and on occasions motorhomes travelling together. The lack of obvious opportunities to pass, allied with some visitors' lack of knowledge of road etiquette on these types of roads can lead to convoys and delays for following traffic. While it is recognised that road improvements are not investing solely in tourism infrastructure and that tourism funds typically exclude road upgrades, a considered approach to addressing parking issues could also help address congestion.

While Ullapool can face some parking pressures, its more compact nature and the fact there are a number of fairly wide, residential streets as well as formal car parks tends to mean pressures are spread more. Elsewhere in the area, parking at a number of visitor sites is a notable pressure and at peak times the lack of parking at these locations commonly leads to irresponsible parking on adjacent stretches of single track-road, in turn forcing pedestrians to walk on the road. The most popular car parks which generally see the most significant pressures are: -

- Corrieshalloch Gorge
- Stac Pollaidh
- Achmelvich
- Wailing Widow Falls (no formal car park)
- Blairmore (Sandwood Bay)
- Balnakeil Bay
- Smoo Cave
- Ullapool (Latheron Car Park)
- Ardvreck Castle
- Clachtoll
- Tarbet (Handa ferry)
- Keoldale (Cape Wrath Ferry)
- Sango Bay
- Ceannabeinne Beach

In addition to the daytime parking pressures, many locations also see overnight parking of motorhomes and while this may be of little consequence in some areas, the sheer numbers or irresponsible / inappropriate choices of location can also cause problems in others. A particular issue across Sutherland – not only in the North West, is the use of cemetery car parks which on occasions has led to conflict with funerals. Work is under way to regulate many of those car parks allowing their use to be managed but this is likely to cause some displacement potentially increasing pressures elsewhere. Several instances of illegal motorhome waste disposal have also been recorded and although a number of campsites exist, the number of standalone public facilities is very limited – currently one in Lochinver and one in Kinlochbervie. The lack of mains drainage in many communities also makes provision of this type of facility more problematic as operating costs are higher. Very few campsites open in winter which also means a lack of provision for the increasing number of motorhomes that visit at this time.

Informal camping in tents is also common with often significant numbers camping at some locations across the area, most notably Stac Pollaidh area, Achnahaird, Ardvreck Castle / Loch Assynt, Achmelvich, Sheigra, Balnakeil and Ceannabeinne. Ceannabeinne in particular has seen some of the most significant pressures of any location in Highland, with up to 70 tents on a single night and major wild toileting and potential health issues. At one point, the situation was so acute that rangers took to clearing gorse on the basis that removing cover for toileting would help reduce the numbers doing so or at least reduce the concentrations of this in certain spots.

Public toilet provision across the area is quite high when considered in relation to the population and the number of communities with 15 public toilets or Highland Comfort Schemes. However, the sheer size of the area means this is still not adequate to meet all demand. While most communities are well served, the lack of facilities at some popular visitor destinations can cause problems. Pressure points tend to be places such as popular hill car parks (primarily Stac Pollaidh), but also beaches such as Achnahaird, Achmelvich, Balnakeil and Ceannabeinne where both day visits and overnight camping take place. While nearby facilities may exist, it is inconvenient for people spending the day at a beach to travel to the neighbouring village while others who may be camping (which is also common at places like Ardvreck Castle) will not do so during the night. Finding solutions to this particular scenario can be especially difficult as providing toilets at those popular camping spots could reduce toileting issues but inadvertently encourage more to camp there as facilities exist.

Evidence

With the North West Highlands being such a large hotspot area, the 2021 Access Ranger data was provided by two different patrols: the Coigach and Assynt one which starts just south of Ullapool and stops around Kylesku, and the West Sutherland patrol taking over from there and going all the way to Durness on the North coast.

The West Sutherland patrol area and particularly the local hotspots within it – Ceannabeinne, Balnakeil, Oldshoremore and Sheigra, were significantly impacted by camping pressures, whether taking place in tents or in motorhomes. West Sutherland was the patrol area that was the second most affected by tents, with typically 21.1 recorded per patrol – way above the 5.6 Highland average. The total of 1545 tents makes it almost twice as many as the Badenoch & Strathspey region, which also struggling with strong camping pressures. In addition, West Sutherland is the Highland patrol area most popular with motorhomes with a total of 3412 such vehicles recorded and an average at 46.7 seen per patrol. This is especially striking when compared with other areas, as the second most popular area for motorhomes is West Lochaber with “only” half that number (23.9 per patrol). The Ranger also came across 184 fire marks (2.5 per patrol), which is above Highland average.

Coigach and Assynt appeared to be less strongly impacted, but patrol records for tents (522 total; 6 per patrol), fire marks (234 total; 2.7 per patrol) and motorhomes (1991 total; 22.8 per patrol) make it the third highest of all patrol areas and again above the Highland average. The outdoor toileting problem is also significant with 355 instances noted and an average of 4.1 of these per patrol (Highland average is at 2.76). Moreover, littering was an added pressure with 576 quarter bags of litter collected.

The most popular locations within this patrol area were Stac Pollaidh, Ardvreck Castle, Achmelvich Beach and Achnahaird Beach.

Site	No of Parked Cars	No of Motorhomes	No of Tents	No of New Fire Marks	Litter (0.25 bags)	Toileting on Site	No of People Seen
Ardvreck Castle	314	318	205	49	75	68	407
Stac Pollaidh	285	139	33	13	40	72	128
Achmelvich Beach	284	102	30	6	51	25	245
Achnahaird Beach	87	58	29	9	11	4	103

Access Ranger data for the Assynt and Coigach hotspots in 2021.

Along with Assynt, Durness is one of the four areas in Highland for which Location Action Plans to assist in visitor management are being developed by the Access Rangers Team, highlighting the significance of the tourism impacts. The current draft LAP document distils further evidence, particularly on camping and overnight parking. It also explains that figures in patrol reports should be considered as underestimates due to some busy periods being missed out, for example as campervans continued to arrive in Durness between 9pm and midnight after ranger patrols finished. The West Sutherland Ranger therefore projected that, while 4119 motorhomes and tents were counted over the season (8238 persons), there were probably 9653 units staying overnight which would be 19,306 persons assuming an average of 2 per unit.

	Counted on 13 night patrols each month	
	Motorhomes	Tents
June	507	310
July	529	400
August	956	604
September	719	103
Total	2711	1408
Total Units	4119	
Estimated People	8238 (2 persons per unit)	

West Sutherland Patrol Area – Recorded monthly totals of overnighting units in 2021.

Ceannabeinne Beach has also been identified as particularly heavily impacted location, with between 10 to 70 tents observed on any one night from May to the end of September 2021, the car park being full day and overnight throughout the peak season with frequent verge parking and between 10 to 20 campfires or barbeques taking place every night.

Finally, the following extracts from the West Sutherland patrol reports confirm the issues encountered in the area, mainly around camping and overnight parking and their consequences.

- May: “Mostly no willingness of public to move campervans from car parks or put out fires as there was an absence of any appropriate signage and so many people were also doing the same that they legitimised each other’s behaviour. “
- June: “Bin fire at Ceannabeinne. Daily traffic dangers with drivers/cyclists on the single track roads.”
- July: The Ranger was “called to speak to rowdy group of tents and campervans in Balnakeil cemetery car park late at night.”
- August: “On the busy midweek evenings, I help lots of stressed and upset campers and campervans who are desperately in search of somewhere to stay but everywhere is full. I [...] intercept cars and vans who are driving slowly looking for somewhere to stop and give them advice on where to go. I often have to direct them to locations that would otherwise be no-go areas and reassure them I’ll clear it with the locals. They don’t wish to upset anyone. The community has come to accept that people have to stay somewhere, and we are grossly over-subscribed on some evenings. It has been successful to get people directed to better locations before they park up in a problem location in desperation. [...] Car parks such as Balnakeil have often had up to 30 campervans on a Tuesday night which has been upsetting for locals but unavoidable. [...] All official campsites have been full everyday all month.”
- August: “When I was working in isolation for a week due to Covid I didn’t clear the firepits at Ceannabeinne and all 19 old pits were soon re-made and used so the site looked like a neglected campsite again.”
- August: “Toileting remains a big problem. [...] Some areas of Ceannabeinne are heavily soiled [...] and many roadside locations are used every night and nearby are heavily soiled patches of ground. It is so extensive I’ve stopped trying to record it in [...] the monthly report system.”



Camping at Ceannabeinne Beach near Durness on the left. Verge parking and overflowing car park at Tarbet Pier on the right.



Achmelvich is another example of overflowing car park in the North West. This composite image of a typical day in the car park during summer 2021 shows the track to crofts and houses being blocked.

Previous activity

One of the first community groups in the North West to respond to the increasing number of motorhomes visiting Highland was the Kinlochbervie Community Company. In 2016, the *Loch Clash Stopover* was opened to the public offering five electric hook-ups and a chemical waste disposal facility with demand increasing ever since. The community now allow up to 15 vehicles park at the pier overnight asking for a small charge to maintain the site.

In 2018 and 2019, the Highland Council, in partnership with the Assynt Leisure Centre and Assynt Development Trust, successfully applied to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to install a chemical black and grey waste unit for motorhomes and redesign the car park at the leisure centre in Lochinver. This project has now been partially delivered with the grey waste unit expected to be complete by summer 2022. The Assynt Development Trust have also undertaken a feasibility study around providing better infrastructure at Achmelvich Beach – a very popular stop off on the NC500 and a very popular beach in its own right. While the study is now complete and the project has planning permission for a car park expansion and new toilet facility, the Trust continues to seek funding for its development.

Additionally, and although unsuccessful in the latest round of RTIF funding, The Ullapool Harbour Trust have developed plans to create a Community Waterfront Project which aims to enhance and transform the safety and visual amenity along Shore Street and the waterfront area in Ullapool by providing a range of improvements including widening the Shore Street carriageway, installing marina pontoons in the Inner Harbour and providing a visitor information hub. The Trust continue to source funding for this development.

In 2021, The Highland Council created four Access Rangers positions covering from Coigach & Assynt to North West Sutherland two of which were in partnership with the Wester Ross Biosphere. These positions played a vital role in offering advice to visitors and promoting responsible behaviour while travelling around Highland. Additional seasonal staff were also recruited to the waste management team which increased waste collections on the North West coast between May and September 2021. This level of service is expected to continue into 2022. The team also supported local community litter picks by offering handheld equipment on request to support these events.

The National Trust for Scotland, who manage Corrieshalloch Gorge, one of the most popular attractions in the area, have recently started work on a major project designed to create a new visitor centre, parking, toilets and motorhome facilities (overnight parking and waste facilities) and this is anticipated to address most of the pressures in the area immediately south of Ullapool.

There is currently work being undertaken by a community group in Durness, exploring the creation of a campsite at Balnakeil with the option of including a publicly available waste facility, accessible at all times (even when the site may be closed), also being considered as part of this project. The project could potentially also offer public toilet facilities which would provide amenities for those visiting Balnakeil beach and could help address wild toileting by those camping informally in the nearby dunes.

Project proposal

The majority of the proposals for the North West Highlands are parking related as this is the main pressure and options for other transport options are more limited due to the geography of the area and visitor patterns. Existing public transport is very limited due to the low population and the large area. With long distances between settlements where visitors might be staying and the places they visit, the areas geography does not easily lend itself to increased public transport or shuttle services as in many cases too few visitors will be travelling between the same locations to make these viable.

However, there are some areas where active travel can be encouraged, such as from villages like Durness or Lochinver to some of the nearby beaches. Similarly, further expansion of Latheron car park which is the main village car park in Ullapool and contains services such as EV charging and motorhome waste disposal (coming in 2022), will help manage parking across the village, thereby assisting the Harbour Trust in delivering their waterfront proposals that will reduce cars and promote pedestrian access along Shore Street.

Many of the locations where projects are proposed need relatively small improvements but there are also three larger ones at well-known pressure points – Stac Pollaidh, Achmelvich and Smoo Cave. Clachtoll car park has also been identified as one in need of improvement, but as yet no consultation or firm plans have been developed this is envisaged as a slightly longer-term ambition. Improvements at a number of the sites will be complemented by traffic management activities on adjacent stretches of road, e.g. at Ceannabeinne, and this should help reduce congestion and also address some of the informal camping issues.

Managing use by motorhomes, perhaps through formally allowing charged for overnight parking at ones that are more remote from commercial campsites, could also help with some of the current issues of intensive motorhome parking. However, although further provision for motorhome stopovers has also been identified as a need, the Council's preferred option at this time is that these

are primarily provided by the private sector or communities, so no dedicated overnight stopovers are included as priorities in this plan. It is however recognised that the community group campsite proposal for Durness described above could also provide a well-needed motorhome waste facility for an area that sees some of the highest numbers of motorhomes undertaking informal camping.

Parking Improvements across North West Sutherland

Project Summary			
Parking Improvements across North West Sutherland			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Keodale Ferry	30 standard spaces	£9,449	Indicative plan available ¹⁸
Tarbet Pier	60 standard spaces	£144,785	Indicative plan available ¹⁹
Ardvreck Castle	35 standard spaces 5 motorhome spaces	£41,525	
Ceannabeinne	36 standard spaces 5 Motorhome spaces	£35,400	
Balnakeil Bay	24 Standard spaces	£10,625	
Sango Bay	Minor Reconfiguration	£5,000	
Strath Broom Viewpoint at Braemore	22 standard spaces 3 motorhome spaces	£47,575	
Wailing Widow Waterfall lay-by	10 standard spaces	£8,000	
Waste bin compounds	6	£18,000	
Shelters	1	£5,000	Keoldale Ferry
Bike racks	5	£10,000	Keoldale Ferry, Ardvreck, Balnakeil Bay, Ceannabeinne, Tarbet Pier
Project delivery costs		£33,000	
Total Cost		£368,359	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council		
Permissions required	Planning <input type="checkbox"/> SEPA <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner Lease <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.		
	Planning not required for the additional parking as this would fall under Highland Council permitted development.		
Potential barriers			

¹⁸ See drawing in [Appendix 1](#).

¹⁹ As above.

Match Funding	Highland Council
Future revenue streams	It is not expected these sites will include any revenue options; however any maintenance will be covered by the Highland Council Roads Department.
Timescale	Design and tender 3 months Construction – various timetables over 12 months Project delivery - 2024

Smoo Cave Parking and Toilet Upgrade

Project Summary			
Creation of new Car park to elevate parking capacity issues at Smoo Cave Parking along with upgrading the public toilet to bring outdated toilet up to modern standards and fit for visitor use including additional provision.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Car park	30 car parking spaces	£168,000	Existing car parking would be reconfigured for other users e.g. disabled visitors / motorhomes
Toilet upgrade	1	£112,000	
Waste bin compound	1	£3,000	
EV charging points and connection			Chargers already installed in Durness village – 1km away
Project delivery costs		£27,000	
Total Cost		£337,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council		
Permissions required	Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	SEPA	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Scottish Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Landowner Lease	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
Potential barriers			
Match Funding	Highland Council		
Future revenue streams	Parking chargers could be introduced into the car park to retain income for car park maintenance. The Highland Council will charge for the toilets to cover operation and maintenance costs.		
Timescale	Design & tendering - 6 months Construction – 8 – 10 months Project delivery – Spring 2024		

Blairmore Car Park and Toilets, Sandwood Estate

Project Summary			
Remodelling and expansion of the car park that accesses Sandwood Bay and upgrade the existing public toilet block and associated waste treatment system to meet current and anticipated future capacity needs.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Car Park	20 vehicle spaces	£183,000	
Toilet Upgrade	1		
EV Charging points			Location not suitable
Project delivery costs		£15,000	
Total Cost		£198,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	John Muir Trust		
Permissions required	Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEPA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner Lease <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extension would require Common Grazing Agreement Other <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.		
Potential barriers	Securing match funding		
Match Funding	The JMT fundraising team have identified a number of potential grant funders to support this project including the Landfill Communities Fund and People Postcode Lottery.		
Future revenue streams	Revenue-generating (through donations) facilities (car park and WC block) would fund ongoing upkeep of the facilities.		
Timescale	Design and tender 6-8 months Construction – 4 months Project delivery - 2023		

North West Sutherland Public Toilet Upgrades

Project Summary			
Upgrading of four public toilet facilities in North West Sutherland to bring outdated toilets up to modern standards and fit for visitor use including additional provision.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Lochinver Public Toilet	1	£100,000	
Rhiconich Public Toilet	1	£162,000	
Scourie Public Toilet	1	£100,000	
Kinlochbervie Public Toilet	1	£100,000	
Project delivery costs		£40,000	
Total Cost		£502,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council		

Permissions required None Required	Planning <input type="checkbox"/> SEPA <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner Lease <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.
Potential barriers	
Match Funding	Highland Council
Future revenue streams	Highland Council makes small charges for facilities across Highland to cover maintenance costs of all toilet properties.
Timescale	Design and tendering – 2 months (part of a HC public toilet package) Construction – 6 months Project delivery – 2023

Stac Pollaidh Visitor Facilities

Project Summary			
Creation of visitor facilities, to provide an off-grid public toilet with processing tank, extended car park, waste and recycling bins and improved paths providing better access to a much wider range of visitors, including all abilities access at the base of the popular hill Stac Pollaidh.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Car park	78 car parking spaces 6 motorhome/bus spaces 3 disabled spaces	£612,000	
Waste/Recycling facilities	1		
Toilet	1		
EV Charging points			Location not suitable
Project delivery costs		£30,000	
Total Cost		£642,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland in partnership with The Highland Council		
Permissions required	Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In place SEPA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner Lease <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ownership/Lease from Highland Council / Pollaidh Estates Other <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.		
Potential barriers			
Match Funding	Outdoor Access Trust of Scotland, Highland Coastal Communities Fund		
Future revenue streams	Car parking chargers will be introduced to the site to cover maintenance costs of the facilities.		
Timescale	Design and tender – 6 Months Construction – 6 Months Project delivery – 2023		

Achmelvich Visitor Facilities

Project Summary			
Redeveloping the Achmelvich beach car park, replacing the current public toilets unit with a larger unit incorporating improved toilet facilities and cold showers, and create a modest space for local information, tourist interpretation and resources about the geography and history of the area to improve the visitor experience.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Car park	40 additional car parking spaces (5 of which are disabled)	£750,912	
Toilet facility with showers	1		
EV charging points	1		
Bike racks	1	£2,000	
Project delivery costs		£73,600	
Total Cost		£826,512	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council in partnership with Assynt Development Trust		
Permissions required	Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEPA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scottish Water <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landowner Lease <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.		
Potential barriers			
Match Funding	Highland Coastal Communities, Area Place Based Fund		
Future revenue streams			
Timescale	Design and tender – 8 months Construction – 8 months Project delivery – 2023		

Although considered lower priorities for this hotspot area, some additional projects would be required to provide car parking or sustainable travel solutions on the longer term on some sites. If opportunities arise locally, further projects could be delivered at the following locations:

- Oldshoremore
- Durness Rock Route Stop / Keoldale ferry turn-off
- Lochinver Glencanisp Road End.



Achmelvich Beach

Fortrose – Rosemarkie – Chanonry Point

A' Chananaich – Ros Maircnidh – Rubha na Cananaich

Background

Chanonry Point on the north shore of the Moray Firth is increasingly recognised as Europe's premier location for shore-based dolphin watching as the resident colony of bottlenose dolphins regularly come close to shore when swimming through the narrows or when feeding. This has resulted in a marked increase in numbers of visitors over the last decade or more. Some of the dolphins' behaviour is related to the state of the tide and this also tends to lead to visitation patterns that see concentrations of visitors at certain times (although these times vary from day to day depending on tidal patterns).

The village of Rosemarkie which lies around 1 kilometre to the North West has a long sandy beach which, as the closest sandy beach to Inverness and a number of other settlements, is very popular with day visitors as well as those on holiday in the area. Neighbouring Fortrose is also popular with visitors and contains a historically significant ruined cathedral as well as a number of narrow streets not suited to large amounts of traffic.

Pressures

The number of vehicles at Chanonry Point frequently exceeds the capacity of the car park (30 bays), despite the Highland Council having extended and remodelled the car park and introduced parking charges in the last few years. Its location at the end of a peninsula that contains a well-known golf course and the fact there are a small number of adjacent residential properties limit the opportunity for further on-site expansion of the car park. Road access which is by a single-track road and restricted turning space also make it unsuitable for coaches and some larger motorhomes. Some toileting issues also occur, particularly when people stay overnight.

These issues commonly spill over into the two neighbouring communities as they are within walking distance for many people and this can exacerbate the pressures there, most notably parking for Rosemarkie beach. While Rosemarkie does have a 35-space car park on Mill Street, close to the beach and 22 dedicated spaces at the north end of Marine Terrace, most parking is parallel parking on the seaward side of Marine Terrace. This often includes overnight parking by motorhomes, sometimes directly in front of residential that are themselves right at the road edge. One section of Marine Terrace is quite narrow and inconsiderate parking and / or large vehicles trying to access this section can cause traffic congestion. Other sections have a wider grass verge which has seen significant damage from parking.

While pressures are commonly most acute in good summer weather when more visitors come to the beach, the beach and adjacent coastline are also a popular walking destination so even on bright winter days when few holidaymakers are around it is possible to see Marine Terrace congested with parked cars. Visitors commonly walk both northwards to the sea cliffs or south along the beach to Chanonry Point (particularly those who have been unable to park at Chanonry Point itself).

Evidence

Issues around parking both at Chanonry Point and on and around Marine Terrace in Rosemarkie have been regularly raised at Fortrose and Rosemarkie Community Councils in recent years and this also led to the formation of a dedicated group to consider the issues – the Chanonry Point Action Group. The evidence described in meeting minutes etc. have more recently been complemented by quantitative data gathered by the new team of Access Rangers during summer 2021.

Between Mid-August and October, a total of 8120 people, 2572 of cars and 259 motorhomes were recorded at Chanonry Point itself over the course of 110 ranger patrols. Patrols were typically for one hour so this gives an average of 74 visitors, 23 cars and 2 motorhomes per visit. Over that same period and at the same location, 49 parking notices were issued – almost one issued every other patrol, illustrating the amount of inconsiderate or illegal parking. In addition, 69 occurrences of outdoor toileting were reported during that same period (0.6 per patrol on average).

Patrols focussed largely on Chanonry Point but a different dataset, covering 38 patrols at Rosemarkie Beach between Mid-July to October, observed 688 people, 652 cars, 42 motorhomes (average of 18 people, 17 cars and 1 motorhome per patrol).

A flavour of the issues can also be discerned from some of the comments noted by the Access Ranger during site visits in summer 2021:

- 16th August 2-3pm: “260 people observed at Chanonry in the last hour.”
- 22nd August 6-7pm: “Several motorhomes were parked here overnight last night and three were still here when [Ranger] arrived this morning.”
- 29th August 11am-12pm: “Very large campervan blocking six spaces.” Ranger asked them to leave.
- 30th August 11am-12pm: “Highest number of cars yet (41 cars seen for 30 spaces) in the car park after scratching lines down this morning.” (Ranger also counted 152 people in the last hour.)
- 3rd September 11am-12pm: “Today’s visitors are less discreet with toileting.” Ranger had spoken to three people about it so far.
- 13th September: Ranger had a look round Chanonry Crescent, Ness Way, etc at 1pm for vehicles they had turned away from car park earlier and found 18 cars and 10 motorhomes.



Informal motorhome camping on Shore Street, Rosemarkie

Previous activity

The Highland Council's Visitor Management Plan developed to try and address expected pressures in summer 2021 saw a funding package assembled designed to address some of the pressures, particularly in Rosemarkie itself. This included: -

- A traffic order to turn the narrowest section of Marine Terrace into a one-way street from Mill Road to Hawkhill Road.
- Introduction of parking management and charges on Marine Terrace.
- Verge protection measures e.g., posts to limit verge parking.
- Variable message signage to manages traffic to and parking at Chanonry Point.

Various factors meant not all of those interventions were implemented in 2021 but these are expected to be completed in advance of the summer 2022 season.

Project proposal

While the above interventions are expected to relieve some of the pressures, they do not address the underlying issue which is a lack of parking in relation to demand. The recent measures also have a negligible impact on addressing the issues at Chanonry Point itself. To fully address the pressures is considered to require a package of measures that both caters for cars and other visitor vehicles such as motorhomes but also gets people out of their cars to use alternative travel options including walking or cycling.

The lack of additional parking opportunities both at Chanonry Point and around Marine Terrace suggest that additional parking "off-site" is required. Some limited parking is sometimes available in Fortrose, particularly outside school term time and could be used with improved road signage but to fully address the pressures a new car park will be required. The preferred approach would be to try and provide this in a location where some users could walk to Rosemarkie beach or walk or cycle to Chanonry Point but where a shuttle bus to Chanonry Point could also run at peak times. Improved pedestrian signage and some improvements to the coastal paths that lead to Chanonry Point would need to be included to encourage more visitors to do so – and this would also improve safety by limiting the numbers that currently walk down the single-track road through the golf course where stray golf balls can be a hazard!

Any parking site should also be designed in such a way that it integrates with active travel routes as well as existing public transport so visitors could come to Fortrose / Rosemarkie on the existing Inverness to Cromarty bus route and easily link into any shuttle service or walk to their destination. There is also a need to cater for the increased numbers of electric vehicles likely to visit and so EV charging facilities would be provided at the proposed new car park. As those using e-bikes would still be expected to cycle to Chanonry Point, Rosemarkie beach or the Fortrose attractions, e-bike charging would not be appropriate at the new car park but could be provided at other sites. Having additional parking sites closer to either village would also help improve the toileting issues by being more conveniently located for existing public toilet facilities.

Two possible sites for a new car park have been identified including an expansion of the current school / leisure centre car park in Fortrose or on nearby privately owned land. Further work is required to firm up on a preferred site, but investigation work is under way. Assuming a site is

identified in the early part of 2022, design work would be undertaken on the preferred site from summer 2022.

Chanonry Point Visitor Parking

Project Summary			
New car park and public transport / active travel connections to Chanonry Point .			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Car park	50 spaces	£200,000	
EV charging points & connection	1	£50,000	At new car park
Path upgrade & directional signage from new car park	500m	£10,000	2 paths – 1 each side of the peninsula giving access from new car park and both Fortrose and Rosemarkie
Waste bin compound	1	£3,000	At new car park
Bike racks	1	£2,000	At Chanonry Point
E-bike charging	2	£3,000	Could be considered for Chanonry Point, a central location in Fortrose and near Rosemarkie Beach.
Shelter for public transport	2	£5,000	At car park and Chanonry Point
Project delivery costs		£25,000	
Total Cost		£298,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council		
Permissions required	Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEPA <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish Water <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner Lease <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.		
Potential barriers	Depending on preferred option land purchase may be required. Availability of a suitable power supply for EV charging may affect choice of location.		
Match Funding	To be provided from Highland Council funds		
Future revenue streams	Parking fees and other user charges		
Timescale	9-month project from 2023		

Glenmore corridor

An Gleann Mòr

Background

Over two million visitors a year now visit the UK's largest National Park, with the Cairngorm and Glenmore area (close to Aviemore) attracting a high proportion of this number. Along with the pressures identified in this plan, there is increasing pressure on the natural heritage of the area, much of which has protected area status. It is imperative that the area is managed for visitors in a way that reflects the area's status as a national and international asset. An integrated management strategy for the area was approved in 2016 and adopted by a number of partners. The area was identified as a spatial priority area in the draft National Park Partnership Plan in 2021 (due to be approved in May 2022).

Pressures

In the Glenmore corridor, there are areas where the number of vehicles frequently exceeds the capacity of the nearby car parks and useable lochside parking, leading to a number of impacts, especially on the wide grass verges:

- Cars parked on soft verges encroaching into the road lanes – impacting the safety of moving traffic (i.e., not enough space for two-way traffic, especially larger vehicles)
- Not enough room to walk on verges resulting in people walking in the road
- Soft verges churned up.

The lack of “convenient” parking for the number of visitors also impacts on the residents living in the small terrace of houses at Glenmore, as visitors often park in front of them and can block their driveways.

The Green Lochan / Lochan Uaine has been observed to be increasingly popular due to regularly featuring on social media such as Instagram. The starting point of the walk is located at the end of the single track to Glenmore Lodge, where there is little parking. Visitors park at the road end and roadside, blocking access and/or preventing turning. Deep ditches at the side of the road have also led to cars getting stuck when trying to pull off to one side.

While pressures are commonly most acute in good summer weather when more visitors come to the beach, the area is also a popular walking destination and can therefore be very busy with cars even on dull days. In the winter, a significant amount of traffic passes through Glenmore to get to Cairngorm Mountain for skiing / snowboarding, walking and climbing. However, if the snow gates are closed, the traffic backs up through the hamlet.

Glenmore is also becoming increasingly popular for events, including both spectator and participation events (e.g. Husky racing, Harley Davidson weekend, Aviemore half-marathon, Aviemore triathlon, adventure triathlons, Loch Morlich swimming events etc). This can again contribute to road congestion and parking issues, with larger vehicles such as the service bus to Cairngorm Mountain often struggling to get through the melee.

While most of the pressures described above are around road traffic and parking, the Glenmore area is also impacted by informal camping and outdoor toileting and waste issues, particularly at the beach on Loch Morlich where visitors regularly stay overnight during the season. A small toilet

is provided but this is often inadequate at busy times and does not cater particularly well for those not at the beach itself. Some overnight parking of motorhomes is also common on some of the lochside locations.

Evidence

Glenmore, being part of the Cairngorms National Park, was covered along with other parts of Badenoch and Strathspey by the park authority's own team of rangers. Park rangers patrolled in pairs and were therefore able to approach more visitors than the Highland Council Access Rangers (so figures are not directly comparable with the other areas in this plan). 78 patrols were specifically devoted to the Glenmore area in 2021.

Informal camping was noted to be a significant issue for the area. In Badenoch and Strathspey as a whole, 806 tents were recorded which is 10 tents per patrol and ranks 4th out of 18 patrol areas in Highland in terms of tents. The number of fire marks for the same area is 384 (4.6 on average), which is again much higher (4th) than in most of the other Highland patrol areas (2.26).

Specifically, with regards to the more geographically restricted area of Glenmore, the Rangers encountered 371 tents and 106 overnighting campervans. The rangers also extinguished 16 live fires and cleared 118 fire pits. In addition, 217 quarter bags of litter were collected. It should be noted that most of this informal camping is happening with a few 100 metres of the 206-pitch Glenmore campsite which is often fully booked in the summer months.

The sheer number of visitors is also an important indicator of the level of the pressures encountered by the place. The Park Rangers have approached a total of 6280 visitors in Badenoch and Strathspey, which, even divided by the number of rangers per patrol, was the highest number in Highland.

According to the Moffat Centre's Visitor Attraction Monitor, visitor numbers for Glenmore Forest Park actually increased in 2020 despite the pandemic that saw the opposite trend for most attractions (443,160 visitors in 2020 against 422,791 in 2019 – an increase of nearly 5%).



On the left, a common view of Loch Morlich Beach on a sunny weekend. On the right, parking issues along the Glenmore corridor.

Previous activity

Significant work has been recently undertaken to improve parking and traffic management in Glenmore and along the lochside. To complement the project previously funded by RTIF that improves links between the various car parks to help spread and manage usage, 2020 saw roadside paths being constructed to provide safe access to the beach and traffic-calming measures (humps) were introduced through the village. Improvements have been made to the FLS-owned beachside toilets and Highland Council is now investigating the refurbishment and reopening of a disused public toilet block in Glenmore itself. For 2022, the previous informal verge side parking along the lochside is being upgraded to hard surface metered parking spaces and an enforceable 30mph speed limit will be adopted. Work is underway to install a new visitor and traffic monitoring system using an Internet of Things and enhanced vehicle and people counters. Significant new visitor monitoring was undertaken in 2021 to help address sensitivities around people and disturbance to capercaillie.

At Cairngorm Mountain, a pilot for managed campervan overnight parking in the Coire na Ciste car park is currently in progress. Operational since summer 2021, it offers 45 individual pitches, a code-locked entry system, as well as essential facilities including a water feed and disposal points for grey water, chemical waste and refuse. Over the course of the next 5 years, the success of the site will be evaluated and a business plan for permanent infrastructure developed.

Future projects and activity

Future additional infrastructure improvements include (but are not necessarily limited to) improvements to the existing tarmac and verge parking between Glenmore campsite and the Hayfield, increased car parking next to the Reindeer Centre, and improvements at Loch Morlich beach. Under consideration is reconfiguring the car park (within the existing footprint), EV and e-bike charging requirements and upgrading the toilet block to make it a year-round facility with increased capacity, all abilities accessibility.

Longer term, a sustainable transport solution for the corridor needs to be developed including consideration of an Aviemore to Glenmore (or Cairngorm) Park and Ride service. The Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) through its Cairngorms 2030 programme, will be undertaking a Scottish Transport Analysis Guide (STAG) study in 2022-2023 to look at the options available and how any could be implemented.

However, not all pressures will be addressed by the above projects and to help identify further needs, the CNPA is producing a Cairngorms Strategic Infrastructure Plan similar to this which is due to be completed in June 2022. This plan will include priorities within this corridor – including links to Cairngorm Mountain.

Summary table

Clàr geàrr-chunntais

For ease for comprehension, the below table lists all the tourism infrastructure projects located in the identified hotspot areas that the Highland Council and its partners plan to take forward as priorities.

Glencoe and Glen Etive	£745,000
Glencoe Greenway - A82 Glencoe Active Travel Project	£500,000
Glencoe Village & Ballachulish Public Toilet Upgrades	£220,000
Glencoe Village Car Park	£ TBC
Glen Etive Road End Parking	£25,000
Glen Nevis	£453,221
Glen Nevis Roadside Parking (Achintee)	£66,600
Glen Nevis Road End Car Park (Steall) / Lower Falls Parking and Bridge Replacement	£151,621
Event Car Parking Nevis Forest	£177,000
Expansion of the North Face Car Park	£58,000
Road to the Isles (Glenfinnan to Mallaig)	£326,610
B8008 Parking and Traffic Management	£326,610
Isle of Skye	£1,320,000
Visitor Car Park and Public Transport Improvements	£610,000
Dunvegan Public Toilet Upgrade	£110,000
Bayfield Car Park Expansion and Toilets	£600,000
Applecross	£132,000
Motorhome Stopover Site	£132,000
North West Highlands (Loch Broom to Durness)	£2,873,871
Parking Improvements across North West Sutherland	£368,359
Smoo Cave Parking and Toilet Upgrade	£337,000
Blairmore Car Park and Toilets, Sandwood Estate	£198,000
North West Sutherland Public Toilet Upgrades	£502,000
Stac Pollaidh Visitor Facilities	£642,000
Achmelvich Visitor Facilities	£826,512
Fortrose – Rosemarkie – Chanonry Point	£298,000
Chanonry Point Visitor Parking	£298,000
Whaligoe Steps (Tier 2)	£90,000
Whaligoe Steps Car Parking	£90,000
Potential total costs of proposed projects	£6,238,701

Tier two – Local priorities

Ìre 2 – Prìomhachasan ionadail

In addition to the eight hotspots described as the “Tier 1” priorities, a number of other areas of Highland either face pressures or have ambitions to attract more visitors to their locations in a way that might help relieve pressures on other more popular areas. This is particularly the case on the eastern part of the NC500, which is often much quieter than the west and where the larger communities and better quality road network mean more visitors can be more easily absorbed. This plan therefore also includes a simple list of other locations where further investment in infrastructure is required or recommended.

As these are not such high-profile areas that might be considered as of national significance, they are not anticipated to attract national funding through the RTIF strategic plan approach – although some projects or packages of activity could still be expected to be supported via individual RTIF bids if they meet the criteria. Otherwise more local solutions and other funding sources are more likely to support these, e.g. local discretionary funding from public or private sources such as renewable energy funds, Council place-based funds, Coastal Communities Fund, Town Centre Fund, etc.

Notwithstanding the above, there is one site on the east coast that is considered of particular relevance - Whaligoe Steps. As the site faces what is basically a single pressure (parking) and the surrounding area does not experience other pressures, it did not meet the definition of a hotspot used in defining those in other areas. However, its increasing number of visitors, allied to the fact there is very limited parking adjacent to a small group of houses means the pressures felt by those residents can be significant. Previous contact with councillors by at least one resident indicated there were even occasions when they were blocked in in such a way as not to be able to get to work. This plan therefore proposes a standalone project to expand the car park here and address these more serious impacts on residents.



Whaligoe Steps

Whaligoe Steps Car parking

Project Summary			
Car park extension to elevate parking pressures at the popular natural attraction of Whaligoe Steps.			
Output	Scale	Expenditure (Rough estimate)	Additional Information
Extension to car park	15 car parking spaces 5 &	£80,000	

	motorhome spaces		
EV charging points			Further investigation on suitability of site required.
Bike racks	1	£2,000	
Project delivery costs		£8,000	
Total Cost		£90,000	
Project delivery			
Project Lead	The Highland Council		
Permissions required	Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	SEPA	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Scottish Water	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Landowner Lease	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.
Potential barriers	Potential access issues onto A99 trunk road		
Match Funding	The Highland Council, Highland Coastal Communities Fund		
Future revenue streams	Potential for car park charges		
Timescale	Design & tender – by late 2022 Project delivery – 2023		

Other potential projects across the rest of Highland that have been suggested to the Council are listed below. While some are potential Council-led projects others are ambitions from partners such as Forestry & Land Scotland or the National Trust for Scotland. These are listed by area using the Council's Area Committee areas in view of the fact that in most cases local funding which is often devolved to those committees is likely to be a major source of funding. Areas are listed clockwise from the South West to match the approach taken with the Tier 1 hotspots.

Lochaber

Car park improvements

- Cuil Bay, Duror:
This location has been flagged up by the Roads Team as being often over-subscribed due to the popularity of the site for water sports. A new car park is required.
- Sanna Bay:
This location has been flagged up by NatureScot's Lochaber Area Team as being a regular pressure point locally. The car parking situation therefore needs to be reviewed.

A few other sites have been identified as "sometimes at capacity" and may justify being investigated as future projects: -

- Old Inverlochy Castle
- Loch Arkaig Road End (Strathan)
- Creag Meagaidh.

Public toilet refurbishments

- Station Brae and Viewforth, Fort William, and Corran Ferry:
Amenity Services have identified these three public toilets as high priority refurbishments.

Active travel

- In line with Forestry and Land Scotland's and the Council's own plans, more active travel connections are required around Fort William and Spean Bridge. This could also be part of World Cycling Championships 2023 legacy.

Wester Ross

Car park improvements

- Torridon, Coire Dubh:
The NTS car park in Glen Torridon has been identified by both NTS and the Council as being frequently at capacity. While there are currently no plans to expand it, a re-design of the car park would be required to maximise its capacity.
- Plockton:
The Council's Parking Team have plans to expand the village car park along the seashore in this popular tourism destination.
- Ben Wyvis:
The car park is frequently at capacity and visitors use the verges of the main road as an overflow car park, dangerously crossing the road to access the walk. FLS are not able to expand the car park as it is surrounded by deep peat. Transport Scotland have introduced a clearway along the fast road but there would possibly be scope for them to create more and safer car parking opportunities there as well.
- Gairloch Beach:
The car park has been identified during the tourism infrastructure audit as being frequently at capacity. While there is a RTIF-funded project to upgrade the toilet and the shower block onsite, there are currently no known plans to address the car parking situation.
- Gruinard Beach:
This location has been flagged up by Visit Wester Ross, the Access Rangers and in the tourism infrastructure audit as being frequently at capacity therefore requiring car park improvements. This site was also part of the NC500 car parks bid that was unsuccessful in the round 4 of RTIF.
- Mellon Udrigle Beach:
This car park has been identified by the Access Rangers as being regularly at capacity and would therefore benefit from improvements.
- Glen Docherty viewpoint:
Part of the NC500 car parks bid that was unsuccessful in the round 4 of RTIF, this viewpoint car park was identified as requiring improvements.
- Badcaul Little Loch Broom viewpoint:
Part of the NC500 car parks bid that was unsuccessful in the round 4 of RTIF, this viewpoint layby was identified as requiring improvements.

- Shieldaig, Loch Torridon viewpoint:

Part of the NC500 car parks bid that was unsuccessful in the round 4 of RTIF, this viewpoint layby was identified as requiring improvements.

A few other sites have been identified as “sometimes at capacity” and may justify being investigated as future projects: -

- NatureScot car park by Beinn Eighe – Coire an Laoigh, Glen Torridon
- Achnashellach
- Gairloch viewpoint
- Lochcarron Main Street
- Firemore beach
- Poolewe Riverside / Village
- Tollie Junction
- Strathpeffer Square
- Garve village – No formal car park
- Mungasdale Beach, Laide – No formal car park.

EV charging points

- Garve:

The local community have expressed in the consultation that they would be interested in being equipped with a charging point. This would give provision around mid-distance between the existing facilities between the East and the West coast.

Motorhome facilities

- Motorhome waste points:

Wester Ross and Lochalsh have been identified by the Access Rangers as being particularly severely affected by illegal motorhome waste disposal. As there is also a significant lack of facilities in the area, motorhome waste points should be rolled out in the area.

- Potential for aires:

Some communities, particularly Kyle of Lochalsh, have expressed their interest in developing aire-style facilities for motorhomes and campervans.

Public conveniences

- Lochalsh:

The area has been identified by the Access Rangers as being by far the most affected by outdoor toileting, with some of the heavily soiled locations having been mapped by them. Whether through capital investment or through the establishment of new Highland Comfort Schemes, there needs to be improved public toilet provision in Lochalsh.

- Achnasheen, Silverbridge, Strathpeffer:

These three locations have been identified by Amenity Services as requiring a public toilet refurbishment.

Path and trailheads improvements (e.g. parking improvements and / or improvements to the paths themselves)

- Rubha Point, Mellon Udrigle:
The Access Rangers have identified that improvements would be required on the portion of the path used to access the viewpoint.
- Coral Beach, Plockton:
The Access Rangers have identified that improvements would be required on the path used to access the beach.
- Fairy Lochs, Gairloch:
The Access Rangers have identified that improvements would be required on the portion of the path used to access the viewpoint.
- Fannichs, Loch Glascarnoch:
Car park is commonly used for access to local walk(s). Access Rangers have suggested that the site would benefit from trailhead improvements.
- Fannichs, Fain:
Car park is commonly used for access to local walk(s). Access Rangers have suggested that the site would benefit from trailhead improvements.
- Coulags, Lochcarron:
Car park is commonly used for access to local walk(s). Access Rangers have suggested that the site would benefit from trailhead improvements.
- Craig, Achnashellach:
Car park is commonly used for access to local walk(s). Access Rangers have suggested that the site would benefit from trailhead improvements. An access bridge over the railway might also be required.
- Corrie Hallie, Dundonnell:
Car park is commonly used for access to local walk(s). Access Rangers have suggested that the site would benefit from trailhead improvements.

Other projects

- Rogie Falls:
A joint project between FLS and the Council would see include a car park enlargement, EV charging provision, path works and an upgrade of the public toilets, which have also been identified by Amenity Services as requiring a refurbishment.
- Torridon:
The National Trust for Scotland plans to improve the car park by the Torridon Countryside Centre located at the start of the village. The works would be in line with the community's wish to provide a better arrival area to the village and would also include improved path access to it.

Sutherland

Car parking improvements

- Loch Fleet NNR:

The Skelbo laybys and the Mound car park in Golspie are heavily used and would both require improvements. First designs have already been made and the projects could be progressed through a Highland Council and NatureScot partnership.

A few other sites have been identified as “sometimes at capacity” and may justify being investigated as future projects: -

- Brora Beach
- Coldbackie Beach
- Dornoch beach car parks
- Melvich Beach
- Tongue Village car park
- Tongue Causeway East
- Ben Hope / Strathmore – No formal car park
- Melness / Talmine – No formal car park
- Ben Kilbreck – No formal car park.

Motorhome facilities

- Motorhome waste points:
North Sutherland has been identified by the Access Rangers as the worst location in Highland for illegal motorhome waste disposal and with the public provision of the relevant facilities being very scarce in the area, a further roll-out of this infrastructure is required.
- Bonar Bridge:
The development of the planned motorhome site, originally funded through RTIF, is currently on hold and may require additional support.
- Drumbeg:
The community in Drumbeg have expressed their desire to develop a motorhome site locally and have previously sought RTIF money to undertake this. As this has not been successful, further support to take this forward is likely to be required.

Path and trailhead improvements (e.g. parking improvements and / or improvements to the paths themselves)

- Big Burn Bridge Path in Golspie:
The Access Rangers have identified that improvements would be required on the portion of the path used to access the viewpoint.
- Torrisdale Bay in Tongue:
The Access Rangers have identified that improvements would be required on the portion of the path used to access the viewpoint.
- Ben Hope, Tongue:
Car park is commonly used for access to local walk(s). Access Rangers have suggested that the site would benefit from trailhead improvements.

Public toilet refurbishments

- Tongue, Bettyhill, Brora, Golspie, Lairg:

These five locations have been identified by Amenity Services as requiring a public toilet refurbishment.

Caithness

Car park improvements

- Cairn o' Get:
This location has been flagged up during the tourism infrastructure audit and related consultation as being sometimes at capacity and therefore requiring parking improvements.
- Morven, Braemore:
This location has been flagged up during the tourism infrastructure audit and related consultation as being sometimes at capacity and therefore requiring parking improvements.
- Camster Cairns:
This location has been flagged up during the tourism infrastructure audit and related consultation as being sometimes at capacity and a significant pressure point in Caithness. It therefore requires parking improvements.
- Dunnet Head:
This location has been flagged up during the tourism infrastructure audit and related consultation as being sometimes at capacity and therefore requiring parking improvements.
- Dunnet Seadrift Visitor Centre:
This location has been flagged up during the tourism infrastructure audit and related consultation as being sometimes at capacity and therefore requiring parking improvements.
- Hill o' Many Stanes:
This location has no formal car park and has been flagged up during the tourism infrastructure audit and related consultation as being a pressure point locally, therefore requiring some formal parking provision.

EV charging points

- The Sinclair's Bay Community Council have said in the consultation that they were interested in being equipped with an EV charging point.

Path and trailhead improvements

- Dunbeath Badbea clearance village:
The Access Rangers have identified that improvements would be required on the portion of the path used to access the viewpoint.
- Duncansby Head:
The Access Rangers have identified that improvements would be required on the portion of the path used to access the viewpoint.

Public toilet refurbishments

- Thurso Tanyard, Wick Whitechapel, Castletown:

The three above locations have been identified as requiring a public toilet refurbishment by Amenity Services. Thurso Tanyard and Wick Whitechapel were flagged as high priorities.

Easter Ross

Car parking improvements

- Invergordon:
A coach drop-off/pick-up space is required for cruise ship passengers.
- Tain:
Due to a lack of parking for big vehicles such as coaches and motorhomes in the town, further provision would be required.

A few other sites have been identified as “sometimes at capacity” and may justify being investigated as future projects: -

- Evanton Black Gorge
- Evanton Community Woodland
- Tain Hill
- Nigg Old Church – No formal car park.

Motorhome facilities

- Motorhome waste points:
With a need for motorhome waste points to be rolled out in the area, the community in Tain have expressed the wish to host one and have proposed Tain Links as location to investigate for that purpose.
- Potential for aires:
There is also potential for more aire-style facilities for motorhomes and campervans to be developed in the area. The Highland Council would seek to help develop community initiatives to do so.

Public toilet refurbishment

- Alness:
This location has been identified by Amenity Services as requiring a public toilet refurbishment.

Dingwall and the Black Isle

Car park improvements

- Loch Achilty:
FLS are planning to improve the car park at this location which is popular locally with water sports practitioners.
- Cloutie Well, Munloch:
FLS are considering an extension to the car park.

A few other sites have been identified as “sometimes at capacity” and may justify being investigated as future projects: -

- Cromarty Links
- Fairy Glen, Fortrose.

EV charging points

- Muir of Ord:
The community have expressed their interest in being equipped with EV charging facilities.
- Cromarty:
The community have expressed their interest in being equipped with EV charging facilities. Their proposal would help address the current absence of provision on the Black Isle and would present the advantage of being located close to the Cromarty-Nigg ferry.

Public toilet refurbishments

- Cromarty, Dingwall, Kessock North:
These three locations have been identified by Amenity Services as requiring a public toilet refurbishment.

Inverness and Area

Car park improvements

- Dores Beach:
The car park at Dores Beach is in a poor state and has been flagged through the tourism infrastructure audit and the Access Rangers as sometimes being at capacity, therefore requiring improvements.
- Reelig Glen:
Though FLS currently have no plans of promoting this car park, it is regularly at capacity and an expansion is considered to cater for the number of visitors.
- Suidhe Chuimein:
This car park has been flagged up locally as being in poor condition and sometimes at capacity therefore improvements should be considered onsite.
- Inverness:
A need for more coach parking in Inverness has been flagged up during the consultation.
- Beauly:
A coach drop-off / pick-up point has been identified as missing in the village centre with regards to the many visitors who come to see the Priory.

A few other sites have been identified as “sometimes at capacity” and may justify being investigated as future projects: -

- Beauly Square
- Cannich Corrimony
- Clava Cairns
- Drumnadrochit Village

- Fort Augustus, The Riggs.

Public toilet refurbishments

- Inverness Whin Park, Beaully:
These two locations have been identified by the Amenity Services as requiring public toilet refurbishments.

Other projects

- Falls of Foyers:
The Council's Property Services have raised the car park and the paths to the falls as requiring improvements to cope with the popularity of the site which is sometimes at capacity.

Nairn

Car park improvements

- Hilton of Delnies:
There is no formal car park at this site and with the increasing popularity of this location, works to create new or formal parking are necessary.
- Nairn:
The lack of a central drop-off / pick-up point for coaches in the town has been flagged up during the consultation.

One other site has been identified as "sometimes at capacity" and may justify being investigated as a future project: -

- Cumming St / Nairn Links

EV charging points

- The community have expressed in the consultation that they would be interested in EV charging facilities at the Links.

Motorhome facilities

- Motorhome site:
The Nairn BID and community would like to provide an aire-style facility for motorhomes and have identified the Maggot as potential site for this.
- Motorhome waste disposal point:
This is also something that the BID and the community would like to offer, and they have identified the Maggot or potential the old toilet block at Harbour Street for this.

Public toilet refurbishments

- Nairn West Beach:
This location has been identified by Amenity Services as requiring a refurbishment.

- Links:
There is a local project around the Links that would include a toilet refurbishment and the provision outdoor showers.

Badenoch & Strathspey

Car park improvements

- Nethy Bridge:
The village has been identified as not having enough parking provision and the Nethy Bridge Games Field has also been flagged up during the tourism infrastructure audit as sometimes being at capacity.
- Carrbridge, Grantown, Aviemore:
The lack of coach parking and sometimes also drop-off/pick-up points has been identified during the audit and consultation for the three locations above.

A few other sites have been identified as “sometimes at capacity” and may justify being investigated as future projects: -

- Kincaig (phone box)
- Laggan Village
- Glen Banchor, Newtonmore
- Loch Alvie – No formal car park
- Kingussie Tromie Bridge – No formal car park.

Public toilet refurbishment

- Kingussie:
This location has been identified by Amenity Services as a high priority for a public toilet refurbishment.

Path and trailhead improvements

- Ben Alder:
Car park is commonly used for access to local walk(s). However, there is also an access issue with regards to the rail network. Access Officer has suggested that the site would benefit from trailhead improvements, e.g. parking improvements or new car park and / or improvements to the paths themselves but this depends on resolving the access issue.

Additional projects for the entirety of the NC500

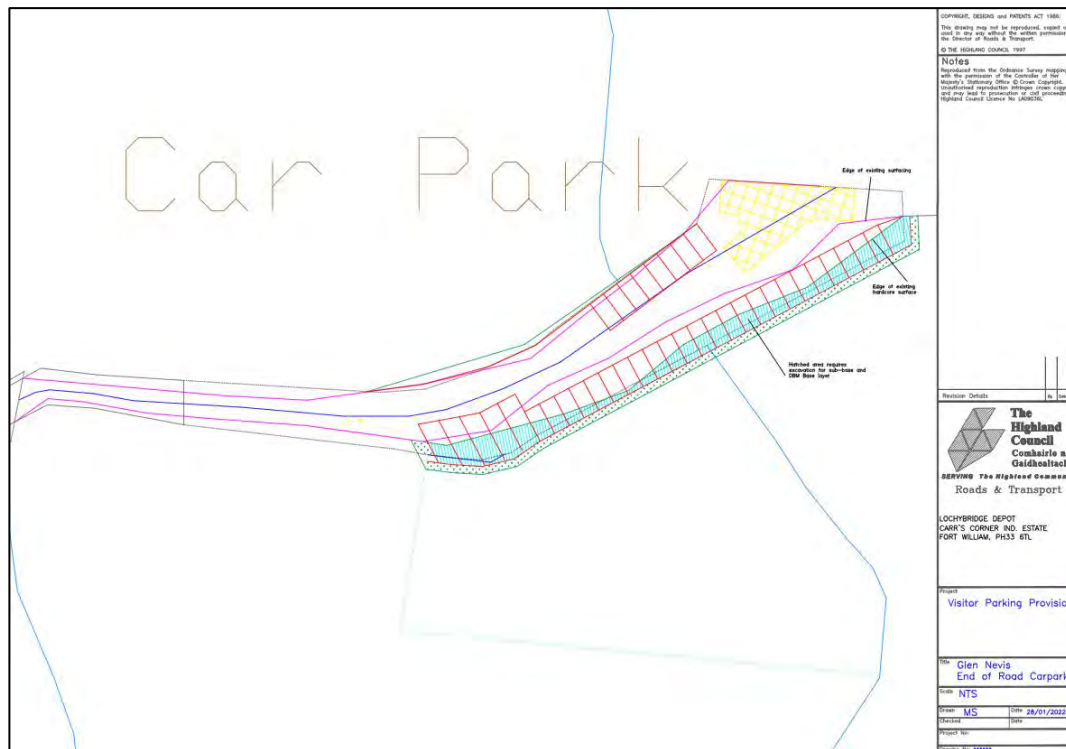
- There is a project from the Public Transport Team, which would create 50 bus shelters along the NC500, including some bigger ones at the main hub locations. In addition, the Public Transport Team propose to install Real-Time Information disposals at multiple locations in the main settlements.
- The Parking Team are looking for opportunities to roll out smart sensors along the NC500 to gather real-time data on numbers and types of vehicles. This in turn would help inform site busyness and would influence traffic management and visitor choices.

Appendix Eàrr-ràdh

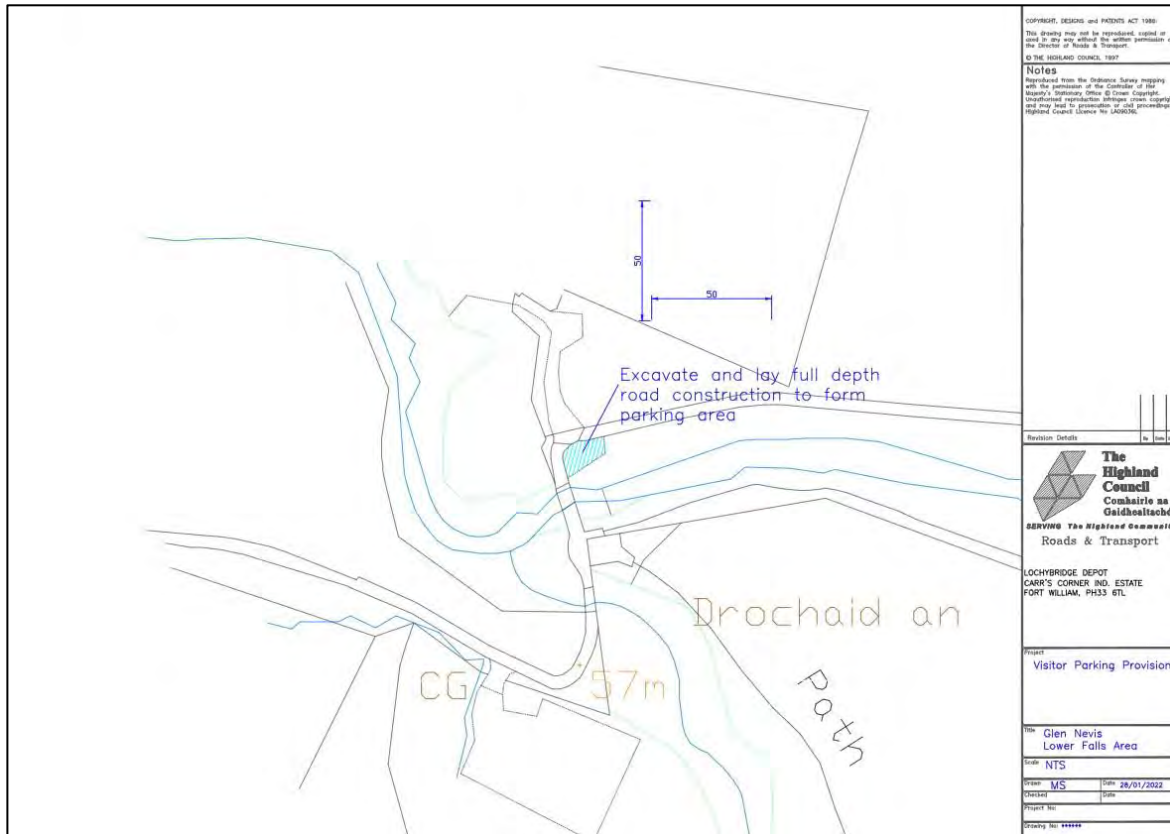
Appendix 1 – Outline site plans for car parks



Drawing of proposed works at Highland Council car park at Achintee, Glen Nevis.



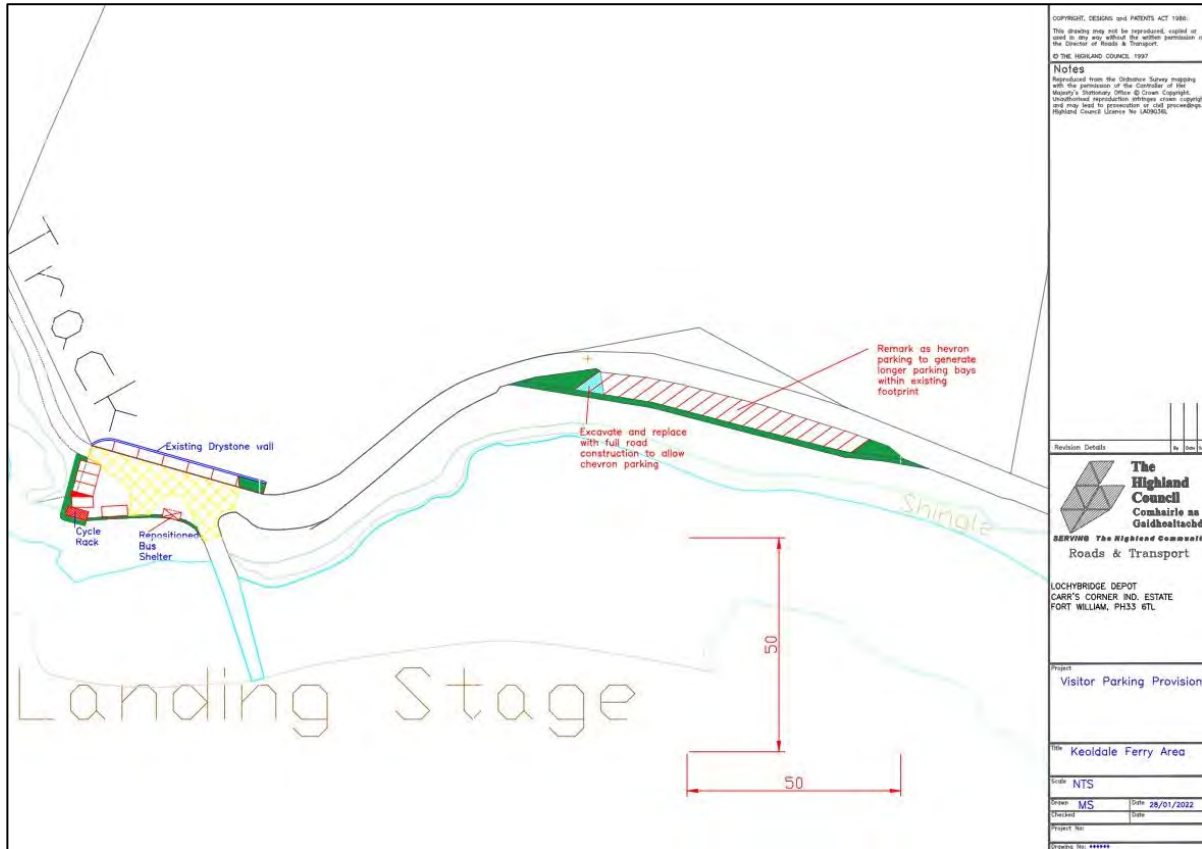
Drawing of proposed works at Glen Nevis Road end car park.



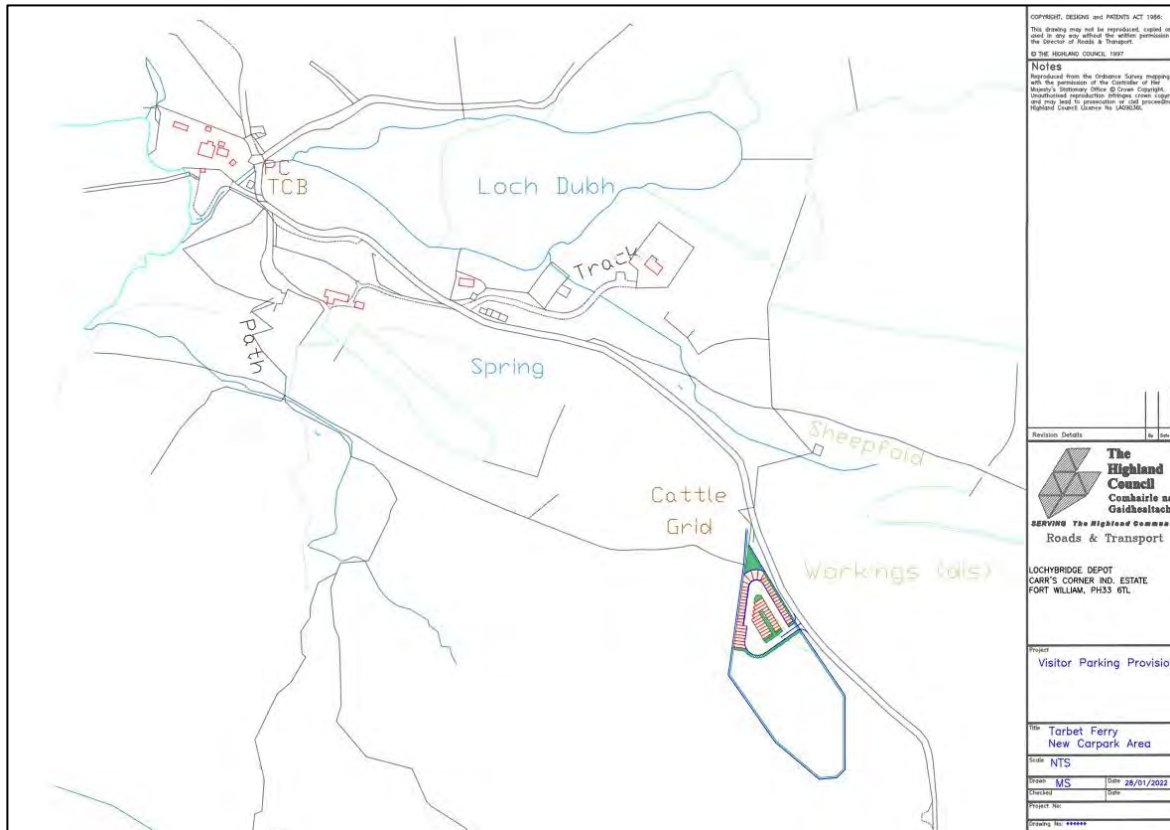
Drawing of proposed excavation at Lower Falls car park in Glen Nevis.



Drawing of proposed works at Camusdarach Beach / Cuairteach / Glenancross car park.



Drawing of proposed works at Keoldale Ferry car park, Durness.



Drawing of proposed works at Tarbet Ferry car park, near Scourie.

Appendix 2 – List of respondents to 2020 Consultation

Community Councils

1. Applecross Community Council (through WRTP)
2. Ardgay & District Community Council
3. Assynt Community Council
4. Aultbea Community Council (through WRTP)
5. Cromarty & District Community Council
6. Dores & Essich Community Council
7. Dornoch Area Community Council
8. Dunnet & Canisbay Community Council
9. Fortrose & Rosemarkie Community Council
10. Ferintosh Community Council
11. Glenfinnan Community Council
12. Glenurquhart Community Council
13. Helmsdale Community Council
14. Kyleakin & Kylerhea Community Council
15. Laggan Community Council
16. Lochbroom Community Council (through WRTP)
17. Sinclair's Bay Community Council
18. Skeabost & District Community Council
19. Sleat & Raasay Community Council
20. Tongue Community Council
21. Torridon & Kinlochewe Community Council
22. Wester Loch Ewe Community Council (through WRTP)

Other local organisations

1. Caithness Chamber of Commerce
2. Garve & District Development Company (individually and through WRTP)
3. Nairn BID
4. Struan Community Development Group
5. Skye Climate Action
6. 'The Heights Hub' (Contin)
7. The Lochalsh Collaboration (through WRTP)
8. The Skye Cycle Network
9. Wester Ross Tourism Partnership (WRTP)

Individual members of the public

1. Laide resident
2. Minginish resident
3. Poolewe resident
4. Portree resident and business owner

Agencies

1. Historic Environment Scotland
2. NatureScot
3. VisitScotland

Virtual sessions were also held with all of the ward managers from across Highland to capture feedback they had gathered from their wards. Similar sessions were held with elected councillors through ward business meetings: -

Highland Council Ward Business Meetings

1. Badenoch & Strathspey Ward Business Meeting
2. Caithness Ward Business Meeting
3. Cromarty Firth Ward Business Meeting
4. Culloden & Ardersier Ward Business Meeting
5. Dingwall & the Black Isle Ward Business Meeting
6. Inverness Central Ward Business Meeting
7. Inverness South Ward Business Meeting
8. Inverness West Ward Business Meeting
9. Lochaber Ward Business Meeting
10. Nairn Ward Business Meeting
11. Skye Ward Business Meeting
12. Tain & Easter Ross Ward Business Meeting
13. Wester Ross Ward Business Meeting

Appendix 3 – List of participants in the second consultation phase

The following participants were engaged with during the second consultation phase in autumn and winter 2021 as possible delivery partners.

Council services

Access Officers and Rangers: Phil Waite, Matthew Bradley

Active Travel: Neil Young

Electric Vehicle Management: Rachael Anderson, Ross Campbell, Roslyn Clarke

Properties: Alastair Stewart

Public Conveniences: Debbie Sutton

Public Transport: David Summers, Ali Macdonald, Laura Carpenter, Donald Henderson

Roads: Richard Porteous, Mark Smith, Jack Matheson, Bernard Kamy, Kristen Tait

Traffic Management: Shane Manning

Waste Management: Alan McKinnie

Agencies

Cairngorms National Park Authority: Pete Crane, Liz Henderson

Forestry and Land Scotland: Paul Hibberd, Robbie Layden

Highlands and Islands Enterprise: Maren Ebeling, Anna Miller, Eann Sinclair

NatureScot: Ben Leyshon, Cara Donald, Stewart Sandison, Lorraine Servant, Adam Rose

NGOs

John Muir Trust: Mike Daniels, Richard Williams, Kevin Cumming

The National Trust for Scotland: Emily Bryce, Paul Bolton, Martin Hughes, Will Boyd-Wallis

Local Development Trusts and related groups

A number of individuals who also represent local groups were engaged with either through formally arranged meetings but also in some cases through an approach / telephone call made to the Council:

Applecross Community Company: Owen Kilbride

Applecross Community Council: Jon Glover

Applecross Trust: Jess Whistance

Arisaig Development Trust: Steve Westwood

Assynt Development Trust: Adam Pellant, Ewen McLachlan

Broadford and Strath Community Company: Shirley Grant

Glencoe and Glen Etive Community Council: Helen Fairlie

Glencoe and Glen Etive Community SCIO: Donald Stewart

Glenfinnan Community Council: Pat Grieve

Glenfinnan SCIO: Fiona Gibson

North West Highlands Geopark: Laura Hamlet

Nevis Landscape Partnership: Lizzie Cooper

Portree and Braes Community Trust: Fiona Thomson

Road to the Isles SCIO: Stuart Griffin

Tain and District Development Trust: Rachel Cunningham
Wester Ross Biosphere: Natasha Hutchison, Saara Viitanen

Destination Management Organisations

Black Isle Tourism Team: Becky Richmond
Nairn BID: Lucy Harding
SkyeConnect: Alistair Danter
Visit Wester Ross: Douglas Gibson
Venture North: Cathy Earnshaw

Business

North Coast 500 Limited: Craig Mills