

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	10
Report No	CIA/06/24

Committee: City of Inverness Area Committee

Date: 05/02/2024

Report Title: Paw Print Trail – Victorian Market

Report By: Executive Chief Officer – Communities and Place

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 The Paw Print Trail (the Trail) is a project instigated to attract increased footfall to the Victorian Market (The Market) at the request of the Market tenants. This report provides an update on the Trail, following the discussion at the last meeting of the City Of Inverness Area Committee (CIAC).

This report provides background to the rationale for the trail along with options to:

- 1.2
- Remove or
 - Repaint/modify the Trail which runs from Lombard Street to Union Street (as shown on the plan at **Appendix 1**, attached).

1.3 It is recommended that the Trail is left in place at present, to allow sufficient time for any benefits or issues to emerge, with a further review taking place later in the year. This would consider how the Trail is contributing to the growth of footfall for the Market and the City Centre.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Note the costs and implications for any alterations being made to the Trail.
- ii. Agree to leave the Trail in place at present until the benefits and any implications are understood;
- iii. Agree that a review will be undertaken later in year with associated recommendations coming back to this committee

3. Implications

3.1 Resource

The resource implications are set out in the report. For any changes to take place this would require further funding to be made available from the Inverness Common Good Fund (ICGF). If any changes are approved, then it would be agreed on what amount of budget can be made available. The installation costs were £835 Plus VAT.

3.2 **Legal**

For any street works to take place this would have to be approved and permitted through the Roads operations team and permit provided.

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

The local traders within the Inverness Victorian Market have focused on positive initiatives to increase footfall to the Market to increase sales and awareness for a place to eat, meet and shop within Inverness. To date they have noted increased footfall.

3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever**

In line with the Highland Council's Active and Sustainable Travel Policy we want to encourage people to explore our city on foot.

3.5 **Risk**

The installer has been consulted and any changes to the Trail would result in in costs being incurred which at this point is unaccounted for so budget would have to be agreed. The installer has confirmed that efforts to remove any part of the Trail could result in the granite the slab surface being damaged which could result in the slab being replaced adding costs. There is a risk that if a decision is taken to remove or amend the trail at this point, it would be without fully understanding the potential benefits/issues.

3.6 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)**

All work to install that trail to date has followed the council's health and safety policies. However, overlaying the Trail would cause a potential trip hazard based on HSE guidance, by raising the surface levels beyond or 2 acceptable heights.

3.7 **Gaelic**

No implications

4. **Background**

4.1 The Trail was installed from Lombard Street down through Drummond Street to the Union Street entrance of the Inverness Victorian Market. This was carried out in the autumn 2023. The purpose of this was to increase footfall within the area but also promote the Market as a 'Dog Friendly' shopping experience. The Trail was also designed to enhance the streets on the way to the Market that would highlight the shops that are already operating in this area. The route was an area that had been highlighted as an area for improvement which has already had net lights installed to add some visual sparkle to the area. (**Appendix 2.** Attached provides a summary of the background to the project alongside supporting comments from Market Tenants)

4.2 Highlighting the route from the High St to Union St entrance using dog prints was seen as a playful way to communicate this message.

5. **Options**

5.1 Following discussions at the last City Committee, work has been undertaken to explore the options:

1. No Action.
2. We remove the Trail
3. We change the colour of the pawprints

4. We overlay the pawprints with a new font.

5.2 **Option 1. No Action** – This is the option recommended by officers at this time. There has not been sufficient time to assess either the benefits or challenges with the Trail. It should also be noted that this was put in place in response to feedback from Market Tenants. This option poses the least risk to time and cost that would be incurred if we proceed to carry out any of the other options. There is also no health and safety risk like with the other options. It is also important to note that there have had no direct complaints regarding the installation of these prints.

Option 2. We remove the Trail – This option carries significant risk due to there being no guarantees they would be removed cleanly and also if this is unsuccessful then it could result in having to replace the paving stone??? which could mean a total estimated cost of £12k. By trying in the first instance to remove then this would cost an estimated £2.8k. This option would not be recommended as an acceptable risk to take based on the financial constraints on our budget at present.

Option 3. We change the colour of the Paw Prints within the Trail – by changing colour of the prints we would have to overlay the print over the current print which would result in the height being increased. Based on HSE guidance anything over 10mm can be considered a trip hazard. By overlaying with a new colour the height of the prints would be equal or exceed that height.

Option 4. We overlay the Paw Prints with a new font – by overlaying with a new font this would increase the size of the prints and the height on the surface as mentioned in option 3. This could also affect the look of font with it covering existing fonts on the surface already.

While the options outlined above are all practically possible, there is Health and Safety Executive and financial risks associated with options 2, 3 & 4. Therefore, the recommendation would be to agree Option1 “Do Nothing” and review the application of the trail at a later date, with the potential of a further report being taken at a future meeting of this committee once more data is available confirming the role that the Market (Trail???) has in attracting more footfall to the City Centre.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer – Communities and Place

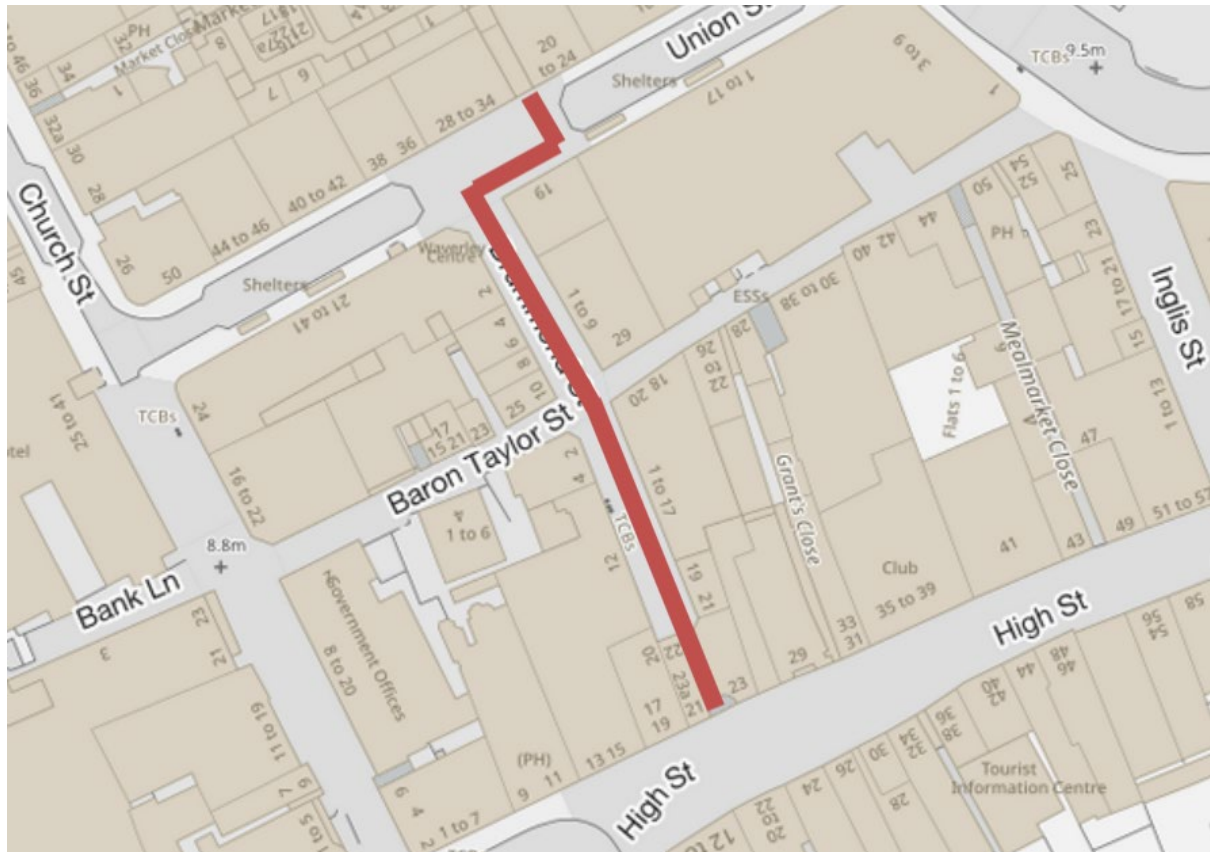
Date: 15 /01/2024

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Background Papers:

Appendices 1 and 2

Appendix 1 – Location of the Trail





LOMBARD STREET - UNION STREET PAW PRINT TRAIL

THE WHY

- To highlight the route from the High St to Union St entrance of The Victorian Market
The Victorian Market is in the Old Town, and it has been a challenge from us to direct people from the High St to the Market. This route was highlighted by our businesses as a particular route that could be improved and brightened up for the benefit of all. We requested a sign for Lombard Street to advertise that the Market is dog friendly, but this was declined. So, the tenants came up with the idea for the footprints instead. Improvements already made to aid with improving and enhancing this route was the installation of the net lighting Installed in Lombard Street In December 2022 and to compliment this we have recently installed the net lighting on Union Street, which will remain all year round. In addition, we will continue to work with businesses and Inverness BID on this route to look at ways to generate more footfall for the area.
- To increase awareness that The Victorian Market is dog friendly.
The Victorian Market is welcoming to everyone. A particular focus this year has been to highlight that we are dog friendly. The famous story of the loyal market dog- who the tale says stayed to guard his owner's shop during the great blaze is a big part of our history. So, it is therefore fitting that we will always be a dog friendly building. Highlighting the route from the High St to Union St entrance using dog prints was seen as a playful way to communicate this message.
- Environmental message
In line with the Highland Council's Active and Sustainable Travel Policy we want to encourage people to explore our city on foot.

DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

Colour & Scale

The chosen colours and scale were picked for maximum impact and visibility. Yellow - commonly used in road work marking to attract attention eg. around schools

Green – this is commonly used for communicating environmentally friendly initiatives

Texture

Non-slip materials were used to ensure safety

FEEDBACK FROM THE VICTORIAN MARKET TENANTS

Jeni Lannetta | Bad Girl Bakery

We've definitely seen an increase in dog users since the paw prints were installed. I think anything like this that encourages increased footfall (especially over the winter months) is a fantastic idea.

Marnie & Sarah Mackenzie | Triquerta Crafts

We have had numerous comments from customers,
"It's so refreshing to get such a warm welcome when you holiday with dogs! The prints are great!" "Our town management would never help us with this, you are so lucky!" "It's about time Inverness had more dog friendly places to shop"

It can look uninviting when you look down from the High Street so the cheery artwork will most definitely bring a smile to the faces of adults and kiddies alike.

We personally love the green footprints too. We all strive to lower the carbon footprint and this gentle nod to encourage walking within the City Centre is great.

We really appreciate your supportive, forward-thinking attitude to ensure continued awareness and growth of city centre independents.

Esther Nelson | Ginger Fashion

I think it's important to get the message out there that we are dog friendly. Some locals still don't know. When I was recently on holiday in the Lake District everywhere and I mean everywhere is dog friendly and the places are packed with families and their pets.

LEARNINGS

The Victorian Market have a close working relationship with Inverness City Centre BID to produce many successful projects throughout the year

which focus on developing our City Centre. Upon reflection there are many learnings from this project but the key one for us is communication. In future we will work more closely with BID from the beginning of any project that affects the City Centre.

Costs to Remove

If we were to remove these prints, then we would first look at removal through burning of the painted area off the surface. This would cost an estimated **£2,800**. If this was not successful and the surfaces are damaged from attempting the removal, then it would mean an estimated cost of £12k to replace the materials. This cost includes material and labour.