

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**  
**CITY OF INVERNESS AREA COMMITTEE**

**2 SEPTEMBER 2014**

Agenda Item	9
Report No	CIA/37/14

**RIVER NESS FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME (TIDAL SECTION) PHASE 1  
DRAFT TRAFFIC ORDERS – HUNTLY STREET**

**Report by the Director of Development and Infrastructure**

**Summary**

This report invites Members to review representations made by the general public to the revised draft Traffic Orders affecting Huntly Street, and to note progress on the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme Phase 1.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council's Scheme of Delegation to City/Area Committees gives the City of Inverness Area Committee powers in relation to the approval process for Road Traffic Orders.
- 1.2 The original Draft Traffic Orders resulted in a reduction of parking spaces on Huntly Street and Friars Place from 101 (mixed pay & display/free/permit) to 39 during the day. Of the 39 spaces, 26 were permit parking on Huntly Street, 7 disabled and 6 permit on Friars Place.
- 1.3 Following representations and further consultation with the public, further amendments were proposed to these Orders to reintroduce more parking and amend the direction of traffic on Huntly Street.
- 1.4 At the Committee on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2013, Members approved the publication of the following draft Traffic Orders affecting Huntly Street, Inverness:
  1. The Highland Council (Huntly Street, Inverness) (Restricted Parking Zone Order 2012) Amended Order 2014
  2. The Highland Council (Inverness Permit Parking) Order 1999 (Various Roads, Inverness) Amendment Order 2014
  3. The Highland Regional Council (Inverness – Riverside West) (General Traffic) Order 1984 (Balnain Street, Friars Place, Greig Street, Huntly Street, Inverness) Amendment Order 2014

- 1.5 These draft Orders were promoted to bring about the revisions to the original Traffic Orders associated with the streetscaping work of the River Ness Flood Scheme, which generated opposition.

## **2. Scheme Proposals**

- 2.1 The revised draft Traffic Orders set out to achieve the following objectives:

### **2.2 Huntly Street**

If the proposed Orders come into effect, on-street parking between Celt Street and Greig Street would be increased by 11 no. short-stay (max 2 hours), “pay and display” spaces. These would be restricted between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Saturday. Outwith these periods, parking would be unrestricted overnight and during Sundays. The parking restrictions in the loading bays located outside Balnain House and House of Fraser (proposed in earlier Traffic Orders associated with this scheme) would be altered to allow free unrestricted parking for cars after 6pm Monday to Saturday. The above alterations would result in an additional 20 parking spaces (in total) being available outwith restricted hours.

- 2.3 The total provision of car parking spaces on Friars Place / Huntly Street would therefore be increased from 39 to 50 (during the day) with 59 spaces available at night.

- 2.4 Balnain Street / Greig Street Parking - 6 spaces on Greig Street currently classed as free/unrestricted would be re-determined as Permit Parking (8am – 6pm, Monday - Saturday). On Balnain Street, 1 Permit Parking space will be removed as “No Parking at any time” is introduced between the junction of Balnain Street / Huntly Street and No. 24.

- 2.5 Traffic direction – If the proposed Orders come into effect, traffic will flow in a southerly direction along Huntly Street (as per original situation), with 2-way traffic being re-introduced on Balnain Street and Greig Street. At the Ness Bridge end of Huntly Street, the left-hand turn on to Ness Bridge will be banned.

## **3. Scheme Benefits**

- 3.1 The centre of Inverness, and in particular this stretch of the river, is at the heart of the conservation area and is enjoyed by residents, businesses and tourists alike. There are, therefore, a number of demands on a very limited amount of space and some of these demands are in conflict.

- 3.2 It was felt that adding parking to the northern half of Huntly Street (past Greig Street bridge) was a compromise that would not affect the ability of pedestrians/ cyclists to enjoy the ‘busier’ southern half between Ness Bridge and Greig Street. This section has been designed and designated as ‘shared use’ for cycle use (with flush roads and footpaths), introduction of parking in this area would compromise pedestrian and cycle use in what is deemed a more sensitive and busier location.

- 3.3 The reversal of traffic flow (back to the pre-scheme direction) and proposed left turn ban onto Ness Bridge will provide a significant reduction in traffic volumes on Huntly Street by preventing 'rat-running'. This will make Huntly Street available to local traffic and generally safer and more pleasant for pedestrians and cyclists to use, by reducing the through traffic. By introducing the left turn ban onto Ness Bridge, this also allows the scheme to formalise safer pedestrian/cycle (toucan) crossings across Ness Bridge (from Ness Walk to Huntly Street). The signal configurations will also provide 'walk with traffic' options for pedestrians both across Huntly Street (coming to and from the city centre), and across Ness Bridge, completing the river walk.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 The draft Traffic Orders were published on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014.
- 4.2 A 28 day consultation period followed, where the draft Traffic Orders were available for inspection at the reception of Council Headquarters, and on the River Ness Flood Scheme website.
- 4.3 Drawings showing the published Orders are attached in Appendix A.

#### **5. Stakeholder Engagement**

- 5.1 Following criticism of the earlier draft Traffic Order procedure, officers increased their efforts to publicise and explain the revised drafts.
- 5.2 In addition to the Statement of Reasons (available for inspection with the draft Orders), officers sent letters to all businesses, residents and Members for the area affected, explaining the process in detail and drawing attention to the public consultation period.
- 5.3 Furthermore, a drop-in session was held at Trinity Church on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014, where the proposed plans were available for inspection and officers available to explain the proposals, this was followed by a community council meeting.
- 5.4 Approximately 20 people turned up to view the plans and the modifications were generally well received. A few negative comments to the proposals were noted, and these are represented in the objections within this report.

#### **6. Objections to the Road Traffic Orders**

- 6.1 At the end of the 28 day statutory consultation period (13<sup>th</sup> June 2014), officers received three correspondences of objection.
- 6.2 These included:
- 2 representatives from members of the British Legion Club; and
  - 1 representative for Westbourne Guest House

- 6.3 Technically, these are valid objections to consider.
- 6.4 After the formal consultation period had ended, officers received a further six correspondences of objection.
- 6.5 These included:
- 1 representative for the Free North Church on Bank Street;
  - 2 representatives for Ego Hair Design/ My Beautiful Ego;
  - 1 representative for Run4It;
  - 1 representative for The Kitchen Restaurant; and
  - 1 representative for Amplifon.
- 6.6 Technically, these are invalid objections and need not be considered. However, given that local residents and businesses felt the earlier Traffic Order process did not take account of their views, officers met with all objectors to understand their position.
- 6.7 Officers met the objectors throughout July 2014 to explain the decisions behind the draft Traffic Orders and discuss their objections.
- 6.8 All nine objections are therefore detailed below for Members to consider.

## **7. British Legion Club**

### Nature of Objection

Two letters of objection were received from officials of the British Legion Club. The objections raised concerned:

- The proposed loss of all parking (not including disabled/ loading and coach drop offs) in the southern section of Huntly Street; and
- The proposed banning of the left turn onto Ness Bridge.

### 7.1 Discussion

On the 11th July 2014, a meeting was held with the officials of the British Legion Club to discuss their objections.

- 7.2 Officers explained that the 'left turn ban' was proposed to reduce traffic volumes on Huntly Street, removing traffic which historically used Huntly Street as a rat-run to beat the Kenneth Street lights. Also, encouraging local traffic only, to the street. The reduction of traffic volumes on Huntly Street was proposed to improve the environment in the heart of the conservation area and making it safer and more attractive for pedestrians and cyclists. These proposals would be implemented with traffic control improvements on Kenneth Street, Young Street and Bridge Street to reduce queuing times.
- 7.3 Officers also explained that the proposed removal of all Pay & Display parking in this part of Huntly Street was seen as necessary to allow the implementation of a shared use cycle/ footpath and improve the experience

for pedestrians and cyclists in the heart of the conservation area.

- 7.4 The British Legion officials believed the 'left turn ban' was ill-considered and would create a ludicrous route for traffic travelling down Huntly Street needing to access the city centre. Their view was that the left turn could be with the flow of traffic and therefore would not contribute to delays and should be allowed.
- 7.5 The British Legion officials did not believe that the proposal would provide any benefits to traffic volumes, and would create problems on Kenneth Street.
- 7.6 The British Legion officials believed that The Council had given little consideration to the needs of the businesses located in this part of Huntly Street.
- 7.7 The officials explained that the loss of existing parking would directly affect the business of the Club, and a number of their members (who are elderly) would struggle to find parking close enough to access the building.
- 7.8 The officials explained that their members relied on parking three days a week for bingo.
- 7.9 **The objection from The British Legion Club to the proposed draft Traffic Orders therefore remains and they would wish both the existing parking provision and existing traffic flow (specifically allowing the left turn onto Ness Bridge) to be reinstated.**

## **8. Westbourne Guest House**

### Nature of Objection

An email expressing objections to the proposals was received from the owners of the Guest House (who is also the Chair of Park Community Council). The objections raised concerned:

- the proposed loss of all parking (not including disabled/ loading and coach drop offs) in the southern section of Huntly Street, and
- the proposed banning of the left turn onto Ness Bridge.

- 8.1 Discussion  
On the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2014 a meeting was held with the proprietors of the guest house to discuss their objections.
- 8.2 Officers explained that the 'left turn ban' was proposed to reduce traffic volumes on Huntly Street.
- 8.3 Officers also explained the reasons for the removal of all Pay & Display parking in this part of Huntly Street.
- 8.4 The proprietors did not think that Huntly Street had ever functioned as a 'rat-run' as traffic crossing Young Street onto Ness Bridge never observed the

yellow box. Their view was that traffic knew they would be better off using Kenneth Street and it was only local traffic with business on Huntly Street who ever used it. They therefore did not think that the proposed ban would have any impact on traffic volumes.

- 8.5 Additionally, their view was that vast numbers of tourists come onto Huntly Street after passing over Friars Bridge and that to then prevent them from turning left would be to direct tourist traffic away from the city centre. Officers explained that this was not the intention and that clear 'City Centre' signage would be provided at the Greig Street junction to ensure tourist traffic did follow the most direct route.
- 8.6 The proprietors view was that Inverness was a travel hub for the Highlands and that people needed to use cars and needed parking. Whilst the proprietors recognised the improvement to Pay & Display in the northern part of Huntly Street (proposed as part of these revisions) they believed that businesses located in the southern half of Huntly Street would suffer due to lack of parking.
- 8.7 The proprietors view was that there was generally insufficient parking on the west side of the river and the Council should reconsider and introduce more.
- 8.8 **The objection from Westbourne Guest House to the proposed draft Traffic Orders therefore remains.**

## **9. Run4It**

### Nature of Objection

An email expressing objections to the proposals was received from the manager of Run4It. The objection raised concerned:

- the proposed loss of all parking (not including disabled/ loading and coach drop offs) in the southern section of Huntly Street.

### 9.1 Discussion

On the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2014 a meeting was held with the manager of Run4It to discuss their objection.

- 9.2 The manager stated that the proposed removal of all Pay & Display parking in the southern half of Huntly Street would have a significant financial impact on their business, and proposed that the Council should consider reinstating at least six short stay bays.
- 9.3 The manager recognised the provision of a loading bay and it was appreciated, however he believed that the provision of four disabled bays in such close proximity was excessive.
- 9.4 Officers explained that, as a business, they would be entitled to have business parking permits and that the number of permit parking spaces (located northward of Greig Street) had increased.

9.5 Officers discussed a possible amendment which considered re-distributing the spaces currently allocated to disabled and loading bays such that approximately 4 Pay & Display spaces may be provided. This would require:

- reducing the 4 proposed disabled bays to 2 to provide 2 P&D spaces; and
- reducing the length allocated to the loading bay to provide 2 P&D spaces.

9.6 The number of disabled bays had been included following discussions and member consultation. It is considered that P&D spaces at this location would be occupied at a much higher level than either disabled or loading bay and as such would more compromise the shared pedestrian and cycle facilities.

9.7 **The objection from Run4It to the proposed draft Traffic Orders therefore remains.**

## 10 **Ego Hair Design**

### Nature of Objection

Two emails from representatives for Ego Hair Design and My Beautiful Ego expressing objections to the proposals were received. The objections raised concerned:

- the proposed loss of all parking (not including disabled/ loading and coach drop offs) in the southern section of Huntly Street.

### 10.1 Discussion

On the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014 a meeting was held with representatives of Ego Hair to discuss their objection.

10.2 The representatives stated that the proposed removal of all Pay & Display parking in the southern half of Huntly Street would have a significant financial impact on their business, and asked that the Council consider reinstating at least nine short stay bays.

10.3 The representatives stated that customers and staff were currently parking in Tesco's which was not suitable and were using the rear door which was not good for business.

10.4 They considered the proposed remaining provision for parking (P&D north of Greig Street) to be too far away for their customers.

10.5 They believed that the proposals showed no consideration for businesses in the southern half of Huntly Street.

10.6 Officers explained that as a business they would be entitled to have business parking permits and that the number of permit parking spaces (located northward of Greig Street) had increased.

10.7 Officers discussed the possible compromise (approximately 4 spaces) raised with Run4It (above) and the representatives of Ego Hair considered that that would be preferable to none.

10.8 **The objection from Ego Hair and My Beautiful Ego to the proposed draft Traffic Orders therefore remains.**

## 11 The Kitchen

### Nature of Objection

A letter expressing objections to the proposals was received from Cameron Associates representing The Kitchen Restaurant. The objection raised concerned:

- the proposed loss of all parking (not including disabled/ loading and coach drop offs) in the southern section of Huntly Street.

### 11.1 Discussion

On the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2014 a meeting was held with Cameron Associates to discuss their objection.

11.2 Their view was that the proposed removal of all Pay & Display parking in the southern half of Huntly Street would have a significant financial impact on their business, and proposed that the Council should consider reinstating at least six short stay bays.

11.3 Their view was that with no P&D spaces, drivers / customers would not have a reason to go down the southern half of Huntly Street and local businesses would suffer. They believed that if some spaces were re-introduced there would be an incentive.

11.4 They stated that the financial losses suffered by the business during the course of the flood works to date, was a sign of the future losses that could be incurred if the draft Traffic Orders were approved.

11.5 Officers discussed the possible compromise (approximately 4 spaces) raised with Run4It (above) and representatives from Cameron Associates considered that that would be preferable to none.

11.6 **The objection from Cameron Associates (on behalf of The Kitchen Restaurant) to the proposed draft Traffic Orders therefore remains.**



## 12. Free North Church

### Nature of Objection

An email expressing objections to the proposals was received from representatives of the Church. The objection raised concerned:

- the proposed loss of all parking (not including disabled/ loading and coach drop offs) in the southern section of Huntly Street.

### 12.1 Discussion

On the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014 a meeting was held with representatives of the Church to discuss their objection.

12.2 Their view was that the proposed removal of all Pay & Display parking in the southern half of Huntly Street would have a significant financial impact on businesses in the area as well as have a significant impact on church goers who currently utilise parking on Huntly Street. They asked that the Council consider reinstating at least six short stay bays.

12.3 They stated that parking in the area was already at a premium and church goers already struggled to park anywhere near the churches located along the river.

12.4 They feared that with many church goers being elderly and/or infirm, they would not find nearby parking and their attendances would suffer.

12.5 They did not believe that the motives for the streetscaping and reduction of parking (to improve pedestrian and cycle safety and experience) was valid as cars and accessibility was more important.

12.6 They believed that the proposed trees should be located on the river bank (as opposed to within the streetscape) to maximise the amount of parking available.

12.7 Officers explained that the current draft orders would not prevent church goers from parking on Huntly Street in evenings and on weekends as they would only be enforced Monday-Saturday (8am-6pm).

12.8 **The objection from Free North Church to the proposed draft Traffic Orders therefore remains.**

## 13 Amplifon

### Nature of Objection

An email expressing objections to the proposals was received from the Manager of Amplifon. The objection raised concerned:

- the proposed loss of all parking (not including disabled/ loading and coach drop offs) in the southern section of Huntly Street.

13.1 Discussion

Officers were unable to make contact with the Manager in advance of this report to discuss their objection (he returned from holiday on the 13 August).

13.2 His view was that the proposed removal of all Pay & Display parking in the southern half of Huntly Street would cause significant difficulties for his business and severely affect his clientele.

13.3 He stated that he often needed to park close to his work to allow him to load and unload heavy equipment, and considered the removal of P&D spaces would severely hinder him.

13.4 He also stated that since the majority of his clientele was elderly with mobility problems they would not come to his business.

13.5 Officers believe that the current proposed provision of both a loading bay and disabled bays in close proximity to Amplifon satisfies both these issues, however notes that the general desire for some P&D spaces in this location would mean that the objection remains.

13.6 **The objection from Amplifon to the proposed draft Traffic Orders therefore remains.**

**14. Flood Scheme Progress**

14.1 Members are invited to note that Phase 1 continues to progress between Ness Bridge and Friars Bridge and Phase 2 is under construction from Friar's Bridge to the Harbour.

14.2 Bank Street was opened to traffic flows in June to account for the summer season and will be closed from September to allow the construction of a pumping station and further streetscaping works.

14.3 Huntly Street streetscaping is ongoing.

14.4 The construction of the combined cycleway and footways has been designed to withstand vehicular traffic loading. Thus the decision to reallocate this space to more parking could be implemented, if so determined, by associated roadmarkings and signing thus not compromising the construction works underway.

14.5 Phases 1 and 2 of the flood scheme are both programmed for completion by April 2015.

## **15. Implications**

### **15.1 Climate change implications**

The Flood scheme will protect properties in the area up to a 1:100 return period event (1% chance of occurring each year), and includes allowances for climate change.

### **15.2 Resource, Legal, Equalities, Risk, Gaelic and Rural implications**

There are no resource, legal, equality, risk, Gaelic or rural implications arising from this report.

## **Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- approve the making of the proposed Traffic Orders as drafted:
  - The Highland Council (Huntly Street, Inverness) (Restricted Parking Zone Order 2012) Amended Order 2014;
  - The Highland Council (Inverness Permit Parking) Order 1999 (Various Roads, Inverness) Amendment Order 2014; and
  - The Highland Regional Council (Inverness – Riverside West) (General Traffic) Order 1984 (Balnain Street, Friars Place, Greig Street, Huntly Street, Inverness) Amendment Order 2014.
- consider amendments to the Traffic Orders, namely to further reduce space allocated to loading and disabled users to provide an additional 4 pay & display spaces in the southern half of Huntly Street. This proposal would address some of the parking concerns of 8 out of 9 of the objections, but would require approval from this Committee to publish further draft Traffic Orders Proposals; and
- note the programme for scheme delivery for completion in April 2015.

Designation: Principal Engineer, Development and Infrastructure Service

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> August 2014

Author: Matt Smith, Principal Engineer

Background Papers: Report to Inverness City Committee – 9 December 2013

## **Appendix A**

### **Draft Traffic Order Drawings**

# River Ness Flood Alleviation Phase 1 :

## Amendments to Proposed Parking Provision on Huntly Street - Sht.1 of 2



Loading Only. Monday - Saturday 8am-6pm.  
Unrestricted parking outwith these hours.



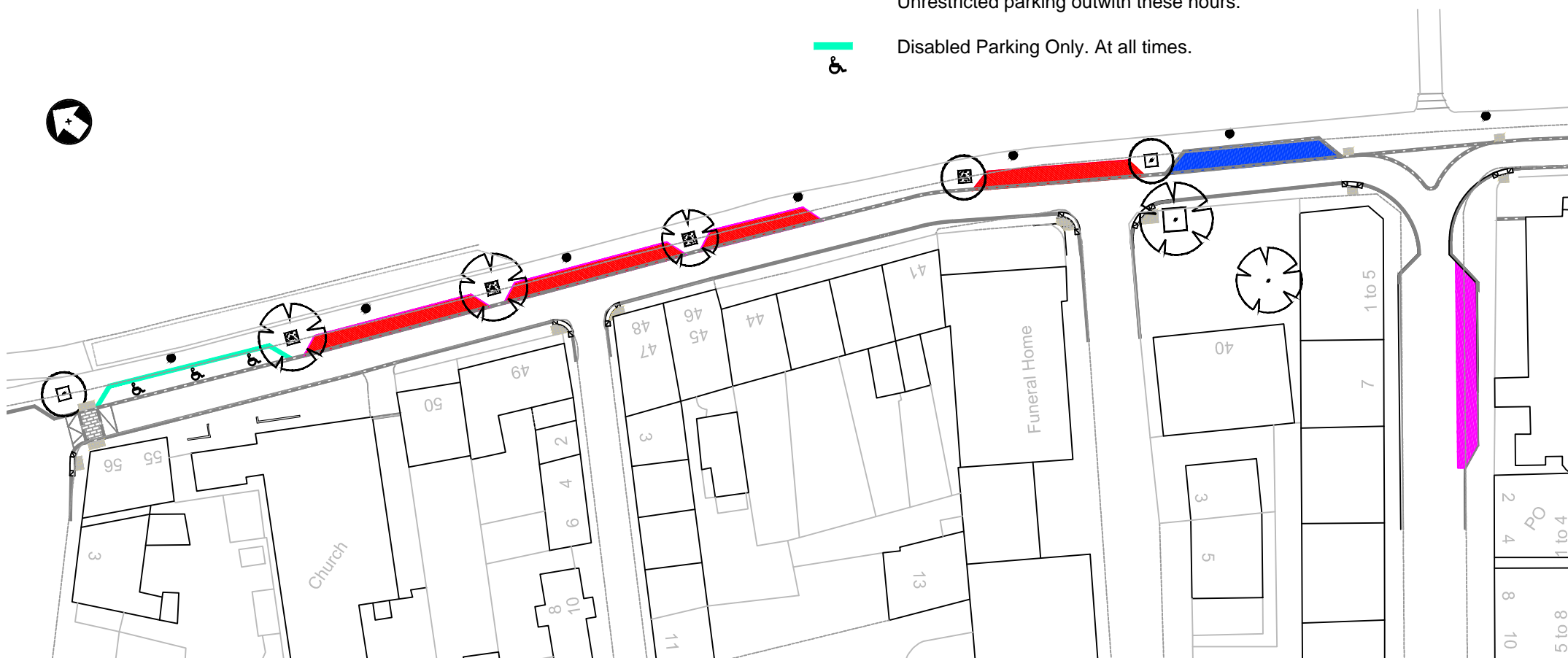
Pay & Display Parking. Monday - Saturday 8am-6pm.  
Unrestricted parking outwith these hours.



On Street Parking Places - Permit Parking Only at any  
time Monday - Saturday.  
Unrestricted parking outwith these hours.



Disabled Parking Only. At all times.



# River Ness Flood Alleviation Phase 1 :

## Amendments to Proposed Parking Provision on Huntly Street - Sht.2 of 2



Loading Only. Monday - Saturday 8am-6pm.  
Unrestricted parking outwith these hours.



Pay & Display Parking. Monday - Saturday 8am-6pm.  
Unrestricted parking outwith these hours.



On Street Parking Places - Permit Parking Only at any  
time Monday - Saturday.  
Unrestricted parking outwith these hours.



Disabled Parking Only. At all times.

