

The Highland Council
City of Inverness Area Committee
5 March 2015

Agenda Item	16
Report No	CIA/14/15

Developing Inverness as a 'Coach Friendly' City

Report by the Director of Community Services

Summary

This report updates Members on the progress made in respect of the recommendation, from report CIA/60/14 (attached), which was agreed during the City of Inverness Area Committee meeting held on 02 December 2014.

After the meeting it became apparent that some inaccurate information had been provided to the Committee which could have impacted on the decisions made therefore the report has been resubmitted for discussion along with this update.

The recommendation from the original report is unaltered but an additional point is included which asks the Members to approve a Temporary Traffic Order for Ardross Street allowing Coaches access from 1st April 2015.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report updates Members on progress from the decisions taken at the City of Inverness Area Committee held on 02 December 2015 to promote a Permanent Traffic Order to designate the use of Ardross Street as the permanent coach drop-off / pick-up location for the City of Inverness.

2. Update on Recommendations

2.1 Permanent Traffic Order (PTO) for Ardross Street.

It was recommended that the Permanent Traffic Order (PTO) for Ardross Street be progressed with a start date of 1 April 2015. However due to the time needed to prepare and draft the Order and thereafter consult and respond to any objections (referring any back to Committee) it has been recognised that the PTO will not be in place in time for the start of the tourist season in April.

2.2 Unfortunately at the City Committee meeting in December the Members were provided with some inaccurate information and although it was correctly stated that you cannot extend a Temporary Traffic Order (TTO) beyond an 18 month time period you can apply for a new TTO to run after the previous one has ended.

2.3 In line with this information it is recommended that a new TTO, attached at Appendix A, be advertised to cover the period from 1 April 2015 until the PTO is adopted. This will facilitate a full, open and transparent consultation period with all the relevant Stakeholders.

2.4 Recruitment of a Coach Ambassador.

Initial discussions with BID to recruit a Coach Ambassador have been very successful and we have worked with them to create the draft job description and person specification attached at Appendix B.

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to:-

- i. Approve Ardross Street as the permanent Coach drop-off / pick-up solution for Inverness;
- ii. Approve the promotion of a Temporary Traffic Order for Ardross Street from 1 April 2015;
- iii. Approve the promotion of a permanent Traffic Order for Ardross Street

Designation: Director Community Services

Author: Neil Young, Transport Planning Officer

Date: 23 February 2015

Background papers: Attached report CIA/60/14

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL (TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR COACH PARKING)
(ARDROSS STREET, INVERNESS) ORDER 2015**

The Highland Council in exercise of the powers conferred on them by Section 14 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended, hereby make the following Order:-

1. This Order may be cited as the 'The Highland Council (Temporary Arrangements for Coach Parking) (Ardross Street, Inverness) Order 2015 and shall come into operation on the 1st of April 2015
2. The Interpretation Act 1978 shall apply for the interpretation of this Order as it applies for the interpretation of an Act of Parliament.
3. The reason for making this Order is to maintain Coach drop off and pick up parking on the South side of Ardross Street, Inverness, during the construction phase of the River Ness Flood Alleviation Scheme, and allow time for the delivery of a permanent order amendment for Ardross St.
4. All provisions contained in any Order, Enactment or Others in so far as the same repeat or are inconsistent with the provisions of this Order and the true intent or meaning hereof shall cease to have effect during the period stated in Article 1 of this Order.
5. In this Order "the Principal Orders" mean
 - (1) "The Highland Council (Inverness Permit Parking) Order 1999 as amended"
 - (2) "The Highland Regional Council (Inverness – Riverside west) (General Traffic) Order 1984 as amended"
6. The Principal Order (1) is temporarily amended as follows:
 - (i) The section of Schedule 12 (On Street Parking Places – Permit Parking) (10am to 5pm) (Monday to Saturday) Ardross Street (South side) shall be temporarily deleted and replaced by Schedule 1 of this Order.
7. The Principal Order (2) is temporarily amended as follows
 - (i) The Schedule 14 PART IV (Coach Parking) shall be temporarily deleted and replaced by Schedule 2 of this Order.

Sealed with the Common Seal of The Highland Council and subscribed for them and on their behalf in terms of the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994 by xxx xxxxx, Solicitor and Proper Officer at xxxxxxxx on the day of xxxxxxx 2015.

.....Proper Officer

These are the Schedules referred to in the foregoing The Highland Council (Temporary Arrangements for Coach Parking) (Ardross Street, Inverness) Order 2015

SCHEDULE 1

On Street Parking Places – Permit Parking (10am to 5pm) (Monday to Saturday)

Ardross Street (South side)

From a point 7 metres or thereby west of a point on the extended kerbline where it meets the western kerbline of Bishops Road westwards for a distance of 21 metres or thereby.

Maximum number of Parking Bays (4)

Ardross Street (South side)

Only during the period 1st November until the 31st of March

From a point 72 metres or thereby west of a point on the extended kerbline where it meets the western kerbline of Bishops Road westwards for a distance of 70 metres or thereby.

Maximum number of Parking Bays (12)

From a point 149 metres or thereby west of a point on the extended kerbline where it meets the western kerbline of Bishops Road westwards for a distance of 49 metres or thereby.

Maximum number of Parking Bays (10)

From a point 204 metres or thereby west of a point on the extended kerbline where it meets the western kerbline of Bishops Road westwards for a distance of 55 metres or thereby.

Maximum number of Parking Bays (9)

SCHEDULE 2

**On Street Parking Places – Coach Parking (10am to 5pm) only
Coach Parking Limited to 1 Hour Maximum Stay.
Coach Parking is Specifically Prohibited at all other times**

Ardross Street (South side)

From a point 53 metres or thereby west of a point on the extended kerbline where it meets the western kerbline of Bishops Road westwards for a distance of 13 metres or thereby

Maximum number of Coach Parking Bays (1)

Ardross Street (South side)

Only during the period 1st April until the 31st of October

From a point 72 metres or thereby west of a point on the extended kerbline where it meets the western kerbline of Bishops Road westwards for a distance of 70 metres or thereby.

Maximum number of Coach Parking Bays (4)

From a point 149 metres or thereby west of a point on the extended kerbline where it meets the western kerbline of Bishops Road westwards for a distance of 49 metres or thereby.

Maximum number of Coach Parking Bays (3)

From a point 204 metres or thereby west of a point on the extended kerbline where it meets the western kerbline of Bishops Road westwards for a distance of 55 metres or thereby.

Maximum number of Coach Parking Bays (3)

Job Description

Job Title: Coach Ambassador

Location: Ardross Street, Inverness

Job Purpose: To provide a high standard of customer service to promote the City of Inverness to coach operators and tourists as a first point of contact for their visit.

The Coach Ambassador will be based at the Coach drop-off / pick up area on Ardross Street and as such will be expected to work outdoors in all weather conditions.

Key Duties and Responsibilities:

The Coach Ambassador must have a customer's first approach to their duties and responsibilities at all times and is responsible for the supervision, smooth facilitation and operation of the Coach drop-off and pick-up area during the summer months.

- Liaise with relevant agencies to assist with the enforcement of Traffic Orders.
- Provide accurate information in a friendly and helpful manner as it relates to the various locations, events and attractions within Inverness City Centre.
- Ensure the brochure display rack is fully stocked and neat / tidy in appearance.
- Maintain detailed, accurate records of number of coaches, visitor comments, issues etc. as required.
- Update tourist information as provided and as directed.
- Ensure all tasks are completed to the acceptable standards and time limits.
- Wear the appropriate issued clothing at all times when working and maintain such clothing in a clean, neat appearance.

Other Duties:

- The post holder may be required to undertake any other duties appropriate to the level of the post.
- Duties and responsibilities will vary from time to time.

Date: February 2015

Person Specification

Job Title: Coach Ambassador
Location: Ardross Street, Inverness
Date: February 2015

Essential Attributes

In order to be able to carry out the duties of this post effectively and safely, candidates will be able to provide evidence of the following.

1. Excellent communication and customer service skills including offering assistance when and where needed.
2. To have the ability to working independently, without direct supervision and be self-motivated, willing to perform a variety of tasks as assigned.
3. Knowledge of Inverness and the surrounding area including tourism locations, attractions and events.
4. Knowledge of tourism supporting businesses such as local accommodations, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, etc.
5. To have the ability to produce creative ideas that will effectively market Inverness as a tourist destination.
6. The ability to build successful working relationships.
7. To have the ability and motivation to work outdoors in all weather conditions.
8. The ability to be flexible with regards hours and days of work depending upon schedule of planned coach visits.

Ideal Attributes

Ideally you will be able to provide evidence of the following.

1. Previous experience of working in a tourism related post.

The Highland Council
City of Inverness Area Committee
2 December 2014

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Developing Inverness as a 'Coach Friendly' City

Report by the Director of Community Services

Summary

This report invites Members to consider the Evaluation on the Operation of Ardross Street as a temporary pick-up/drop-off point for coaches with a view to making the arrangement permanent.

Therefore the recommendation is for the redesignation of part of Ardross Street as the long-term location for coach drop-off/pick-up in the City of Inverness.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report updates Members on progress from the decisions taken, at the City of Inverness Area Committee held on 11 February 2013, to designate the use of Ardross Street as a temporary coach drop-off / pick-up location and to also evaluate Ardross Street as a long term option for coach drop-off / pick-up in the City of Inverness.
- 1.2 As stated in previous reports there is an urgent need to create a long-term coach drop-off / pick-up point at a convenient location in the City Centre within suitable walking distance of all major attractions. This needs to be agreed and established in time for the 2015 season which begins at the end of March.

2. Review of Temporary Solution

- 2.1 In March 2013 Ardross Street was designated as the official temporary coach drop-off / pick up point for Inverness.
- 2.2 To facilitate this arrangement a Temporary Traffic Order (TTO) was introduced for the Northern Meeting Park side of Ardross Street which restricted its use to only Coaches between the hours of 1000 and 1700.
- 2.3 On-street signage was erected to reflect the restrictions imposed by the TTO and the car park ticket machines were covered during the entirety of this period.
- 2.4 During 2013 regular meetings were held with residents and businesses of Ardross Street to discuss their concerns resulting from the implementation of the TTO. Action points taken from these meetings resulted in a revision of the TTO in April 2014 to stipulate that coaches were strictly prohibited overnight on Ardross Street between the hours of 1700 and 1000. This change to the TTO

was reflected in updated on-street signage.

2.5 There were some other concerns raised by the Stakeholders during the period of the TTO which could not be resolved. These included:

- Lack of enforcement of Traffic Order by Council and Police with coaches regularly parking overnight with no punitive action being taken. Cars were also noted to be parking during coach only periods with no penalty imposed.
- Coaches waiting for long periods with engines running causing a disturbance for the neighbouring businesses and causing pollution.
- Ardross Street was too long a walk to and from the City Centre for some older or infirm passengers.

2.6 The Temporary Traffic Order ended on 31 October 2014 automatically reinstating the Permanent Traffic Order returning Ardross Street to car parking only. The coach signage has since been covered and the bags removed from the car parking ticket machines.

2.7 There is now no formal drop-off / pick-up location for coaches in Inverness.

3. Alternative Coach drop-off / pick-up Locations

3.1 A Working Group including Officers from The Highland Council and representatives from the Confederation of Passenger Transport and Local Coach Operators was formed earlier this year to identify alternative locations for a coach drop-off / pick-up area as near as possible to Inverness City Centre. Parameters that were considered to be critical and therefore influenced the discussions included:

- Distance from Coach drop-off / pick-up to the City Centre (Victorian Market)
- Number of Coach bays available. On cruise liner days, when there are more tours than normal visiting Inverness, more than 10 coach bays must be available.
- Car parking that would be displaced by Coaches if solution was adopted.

3.2 The baseline that the group worked from was Ardross Street (**Appendix A**) which is 568 metres from the City Centre and has space for 12 coaches whilst displacing 35 car park spaces.

3.3 The following locations were identified as potential alternatives to Ardross Street:

Cathedral Car Park (Appendix B). The Cathedral Car Park is 650m from the City Centre. The location could accommodate 9 coach bays by removing 72 car parking spaces.

Conclusion: Further away from City Centre with less coaches accommodated and more car parking spaces removed makes this an unattractive alternative to Ardross Street.

Church Street (Appendix C). Church Street is 195m from the City Centre. The location could accommodate a maximum of 5 coaches by removing 30 car parking spaces.

Conclusion: Although closer to the City Centre this location is unsuitable due to fewer coach spaces and the necessity to remove some city centre car parking spaces which are at a premium.

Bank Street (Appendix D). Bank Street is 146m from the City Centre. The location could accommodate a maximum of 4 coaches by removing 0 car parking spaces.

Conclusion: Too few coaches accommodated by this solution.

Morrisons Car Park (Appendix E). Morrisons Car Park is 574m from the City Centre. The location could accommodate a maximum of 10 coaches by removing an unknown number of car parking spaces.

Conclusion: This Car Park is privately owned and would come at a considerable cost to implement this solution. No advantage over Ardross Street as equidistant to the City Centre.

For ease of reference a map of all locations is attached at **Appendix F.**

3.4 This group could find no suitable alternative solution for a designated coach drop-off / pick-up area, in or around the City Centre, to that which is offered by Ardross Street.

4. Proposal for Ardross Street

4.1 Ardross Street as the long-term location for an Inverness City coach drop-off / pick-up has support from across the Coach and Transport industry.

4.2 *“As the trade association for the bus and coach industry, the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK supports Highland Council’s proposals for coach parking to remain on Ardross Street as part of Inverness’ bid to become a ‘coach friendly’ location. Passengers benefit from having a central fixed known point of return with good signage to and from the city centre / points of interest”*
– **Jeremy Tinsley, General Manager, Confederation of Passenger Transport**

“Having used the drop off pick up and parking point at Ardross St I have found it very useful. On cruise days it is vital to ensure the smooth running of passengers from the ship to spend time in the city” – Kevin Mayne, Owner of Maynes Coaches

“Morrison Tours has found the Ardross Street arrangements to be a success in terms of guaranteed coach parking and easily identifiable landmark for the passengers (next to cathedral). These arrangements work for our numerous coaches that we have visit Inverness each cruise season” – Claire Risk, Senior Tour Co-ordinator, Morrisons Tours

“From our own experience we would strongly advise continuing to use Ardross Street in 2015. There is no other suitable area close to the city centre which can allow parking, and cater for drop-offs / pickups. It is ideal for touring coaches, and gives particularly good access for coaches servicing the cruise liners coming into Invergordon, by accessing the city from Kessock Bridge to Friars Bridge, along Kenneth Street and on into Ardross Street. This keeps coaches away from Chapel Street, Academy Street and avoids congestion in the city centre. On leaving Ardross Street along the reverse route, it gives a quick exit from the city. We would, therefore, strongly support the continued use of Ardross Street” – Norman Gollan, General Manager, D&E Coaches

4.3 It is proposed to introduce a permanent Traffic Order, commencing April 2015, which will cover the Northern Meeting Park side of Ardross Street. The order will include provisions for:

- Removal of the pay and display bays along the full length of Ardross Street (Northern Meeting Park side only).
- Change of use of the area to allow coaches drop-off / pick-up during the hours of 1000 and 1700 only. Coaches will be strictly prohibited at all other times.

4.4 In order to facilitate the smooth running of this location as the long-term solution it is understood that we will need to address the following concerns raised at Stakeholder meetings:

- Lack of enforcement of Traffic Order by Council and Police with coaches regularly parking overnight with no punitive action being taken. Cars were also noted to be parking during coach only periods with no penalty imposed.
- Coaches waiting for long periods with engines running causing a disturbance for the neighbouring businesses and causing pollution.

5. Enforcement

5.1 We retain a traffic enforcement resource through the Traffic Warden service however in recognition of the importance of coaches to the economy of the City

it is proposed that a Coach Ambassador be employed between April and October 2015, on a trial basis, to act primarily as a liaison between the residents / businesses on Ardross Street and the Coach Operators ensuring that any concerns are addressed timeously and effectively.

- 5.2 Whilst ensuring the smooth operation of the coach facility will be the Ambassador's primary concern, they will also be expected to welcome tourists to the City, provide directions to amenities, answer questions the visitor's may have and encourage our guests to visit the many points of interest in the City Centre. It is proposed that a review will take place in October 2015 to evaluate the effectiveness of this new role with a view to continuing it for future seasons.
- 5.3 It is proposed that this pilot be funded initially by the Inverness Common Good Fund and a fully costed application will be put forward to the Inverness Common Good Fund Grants Sub-committee in due course. It is hoped to obtain partner support if the pilot project is successful.
- 5.4 Consultation will be undertaken before the Traffic Order is implemented and it is proposed that a programme of regular meetings be established bringing all stakeholders together to discuss and resolve issues.

6. Signage and Publicity

- 6.1 Signage will be required on all main trunk routes in to Inverness and within the City indicating the way to the drop-off / pick-up area. These would be priced and ordered once the location has been approved.
- 6.2 The Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) will arrange for the approved location to be advertised in their industry recognised publications and will work with us towards our goal of Inverness becoming a "Coach Friendly" City.
- 6.3 The Highland Council, BID and the transport industry websites will publicise details of the arrangements.

7. Implications

7.1 Resource implications

The cost of implementing the proposal will be signage costs which will be met from current budgets.

Staff Costs relating to the Coach Ambassador role will be detailed to the Common Good Fund Sub-committee.

7.2 There are no legal implications

7.3 Equality implications

Any provision sanctioned by the Council will meet with the terms of the Councils Equalities Policy

7.4 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7.5 There are no risk implications arising from this report.

7.6 There are no rural implications arising from this report.

8. City/Highland Context

8.1 Inverness is seen as a hub for tourists. By improving the City's status as a place to visit, we will attract more coach operators to the Highland Capital and so also bring significant benefit to adjacent attractions such as Loch Ness and Culloden. The publicity of the City achieving 'Coach Friendly' status will also help the wider Highland economy.

8.2 The consequences of not implementing the Ardross Street solution are far reaching.

8.3 The coach operators travelling to Inverness will have no other choice but to use loading bays and in some cases bus stops thereby causing major disruption to City Centre traffic flows.

8.4 No signage or information will be available to direct coach operators to use the designated area within the City Centre as a pick-up and drop-off point because there won't be one.

8.5 There is a real danger that without a suitable facility coach operators will be forced to bypass Inverness as a tourist destination and take their business elsewhere.

9. Next Steps

9.1 In order to implement the Ardross Street proposal in time for the 2015 summer tourist season the following will need to be achieved.

- Agreement from the City of Inverness Area Committee that the proposal for Ardross Street be implemented;
- A permanent Traffic Order created for Ardross Street for change of use from pay and display parking to coach drop-off / pick-up;
- Signage to be installed across the road network adjacent to the City at suitable and strategic locations;
- Publicity to be produced both electronically and on paper and widely distributed to promote the use of Ardross Street as the Inverness City coach drop-off / pick-up location; and
- A Coach Ambassador to be recruited subject to the approval of an application for funding to the Common Good Fund Grant Subcommittee.

- 9.2 Throughout the whole process the Central Ward Members will be kept appraised.
- 9.3 By making the recommended change now, the City of Inverness will have a sustainable facility which will be a benefit to tourists, coach operators and the businesses in the centre of Inverness.

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to:-

- i. Approve Ardross Street as the permanent Coach drop-off / pick-up solution for Inverness;
- ii. Approve the promotion of a permanent Traffic Order for Ardross Street;
- iii. Note that signage will be installed across the road network adjacent to the City;
- iv. Note that publicity will be produced promoting the use of Ardross Street as the Inverness City coach drop-off / pick-up location; and
- v. Note that an application will be made to the Common Good Fund Grant Sub-committee to fund the recruitment of a Coach Ambassador

Designation: Director Community Services

Author: Neil Young, Transport Officer

Date: 18 November 2014

Background papers: None