

Agenda Item	6
Report No	SR/13/26

The Highland Council

Committee: Isle of Skye and Raasay

Date: 1 June 2026

Report Title: Portree Mobility Hubs

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 To provide Members with an update on work undertaken to date on the provision of a Mobility Hub or Hubs for Portree, and to ask them to agree on the proposed next steps recommended following the initial summary report.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

- i. **Note** the findings of the initial summary report on Mobility Hubs; and
- ii. **Agree** that officers should further explore the deliverability of the emerging preferred options identified in this report.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** - It is expected that any work arising from this report will, at this stage, be carried out within existing revenue and capital budgets allocated to Active Travel. Therefore, there are no additional resource requirements for Members to consider at this stage.

3.2 **Legal** - No legal implications have been identified.

3.3 **Risk** - No risks have been identified.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – No health and safety implications have been identified.

3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic implications at this stage in the process. Should a final site or sites be identified and progress to construction, any additional road signage, information boards, etc. required will be produced in line with the Council's Gaelic policies.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is a monitoring update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Background

- 5.1 The Portree Active Travel Masterplan (2022) clearly identifies the requirement for mobility hubs at multiple locations surrounding Portree, consistent with Park & Ride locations identified as part of the Portree Parking Study 2018. This would improve both regional and local connectivity as well as helping to reduce vehicle movements in the centre of Portree through the reallocation of parking spaces.
- 5.2 The Portree Link Road will connect the A87 Dunvegan Road with the A855 Staffin Road and provide access for housing developments at Home Farm and Kiltaraglen (PT02, PT03 and PT04 in WestPlan). These are strategic developments which will see significant expansion of North Portree and generate additional travel requirements within the town.
- 5.3 The Active Travel Masterplan further identifies a range of active travel priorities around Portree Town Centre and Portree Harbour, which will be enabled by the construction of the Link Road. Three of these:-
- Somerled Square Public Realm Enhancements.
 - Wentworth Street Pedestrianisation.
 - Portree Harbour Public Realm Enhancements.

Specifically identify a requirement for reallocation of parking to mobility hub locations.

- 5.4 In late 2025, a sum of £15,000 within the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation was identified as available for delivery of projects relating to Mobility Hubs within the current financial year. It was agreed within the Active Travel team that this money would be used to progress the action on Portree Mobility Hubs within the Active Travel Masterplan, and ARUP were commissioned to produce an initial short report identifying, assessing, and ranking potential sites for a Mobility Hub or Hubs.

6 Report Overview and Findings

6.1 Following initial inception meetings with The Highland Council, a review of all available existing data was undertaken. This consisted of both open-source datasets and The Highland Council's internal datasets and covered a range of areas including:-

- Active Travel Network (inc. future planned)
- Traffic Count Data
- Journey Times
- Population and Demographic Data
- Future Housing Developments
- Infrastructure (electricity/telecoms)
- Flood Risk
- Land Parcels

In addition, a Transport Baseline Review was undertaken to assess current transport conditions around Portree, and the implications for the siting and operation of future mobility hub(s).

6.2 Based on the above, a set of indicators were developed in order to score any potential sites identified through the study. These consisted of 14 individual indicators, grouped under three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):-

- **Transport connectivity:** An assessment of the ease of access to a site by each mode of transport and its proximity to potential users
- **Accommodating parking capacity:** An assessment of a site's ability to accommodate the identified parking requirements for a Portree Mobility Hub; and
- **Site deliverability and cost:** An assessment of the complexity associated with delivering a mobility hub at a site, and its relative cost implications.

6.3 A set of key requirements for any future mobility hub(s) was then developed, calculating a total site area required as well as additional infrastructure requirements (e.g. electricity for EV charging, telecoms for CCTV/real time information).

Crucial to this was an estimation of future required parking capacity. It was agreed that a target of 160 spaces for motorised vehicles would be provided (double the number which would be removed from the town centre under the proposals noted in 5.3), along with space for 3 full-size bus stances and 10 cycle parking spaces. The total gross area required to accommodate this composition was calculated to be approximately 6,000 m², which was used to search for suitable candidate sites for a mobility hub.

6.4 A longlist of 13 sites was identified and filtered from all possible candidate land parcels based on a range of criteria including:-

- A minimum search area of 2,500m² (equal to 40% of the 6,000m² target)
- Proximity to the major road network
- Located outside the town centre
- Must have telecoms connectivity
- Must have no existing buildings/fixed land use(s)
- Must be either unallocated for development or allocated as Mixed Use / Community within the Local Development Plan.

6.5 From this longlist, a total of eight parcels were shortlisted, following an exercise which excluded several parcels featuring:-

- Unsuitable gradients or elevation changes
- Watercourses (rivers or streams) running through site; and/or
- Poor access to the site (e.g. singletrack roads, bottlenecks)



Figure 3: Shortlisted options in relation to the Town Centre (Basemap: © Esri)

ID	Name	Description
1	Land south of the burial ground	A large THC-owned site on the southern approach Portree.
4	Land adjacent to Portree Primary School	A large site west of Portree Town Centre accessed via B885.
6	Portree High School	A centrally located, THC-owned site that could support temporary operation during holiday periods.
8	Land adjacent to the funeral director	A small site central adjacent to A87(T).
9	Land opposite of the Co-Op	A small site to the north of Portree Town Centre
13	Land west of A855	A large site northeast of Portree on the A855 corridor.
14	Land adjacent to the proposed Tesco	A large site north of Portree, located near land allocated retail uses.
15	Land east of A87(N)	A large site north of Portree adjacent to A87(T).

6.6 An options assessment was then carried out, scoring the sites against the three identified KPIs and contained indicators.

Table 3: Scoring summary

Site Option	Land south of the burial ground	Land adjacent to Portree Primary School	Portree High School	Land adjacent to the funeral director	Land opposite of the Co-Op	Land west of A855	Land adjacent to the proposed Tesco	Land east of A87(N)
	1	4	6	8	9	13	14	15
Transport connectivity								
Active travel infrastructure	Green	Red	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green
Major road network access	Green	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Large vehicle access	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Ease of access to destinations by walking	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Red
Ease of access to destinations by public transport	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow
Ease of connection to existing public transport routes	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red
Local access and resident populations	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red
<i>Average score for the KPI</i>	66%	49%	89%	94%	66%	43%	66%	60%
Accommodating parking demand								
Accommodating target capacity	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
Opportunity for future expansion	Green	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
<i>Average score for the KPI</i>	100%	100%	20%	40%	80%	100%	100%	100%
Deliverability and cost								
Connection to relevant utilities	Red	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Flood risk	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Yellow
Land acquisition	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Road / junction works, signals and TROs	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Cost	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
<i>Average score for the KPI</i>	60%	76%	100%	36%	44%	76%	76%	68%
Overall score	68%	65%	83%	70%	65%	63%	75%	68%

Overall, the highest scoring options from the assessment were:

- Option 6: High school (scored 83%); and
- Option 14: Land adjacent to proposed Tesco (scored 75%)

It was agreed that weighting would not be given to the KPIs, with the assessment designed to prioritise sites that score well across the full range of criteria. However, a number of emerging priorities were identified during the review of initial scoring:-
Transport connectivity to local destinations within Portree a higher priority than journey times to visitor destinations across Skye

- Cost remains an important consideration due to current spending and funding realities; and
- Future expansion less important as already doubling potential parking capacity.

7 Emerging Preferred Options and Next Steps

7.1 The High School (Option 6) scored the highest in the options assessment and would be the preferred option. However, as the site is in use during term time, there are limitations on the potential operating times and availability of the site as a mobility hub.

Because of the existing function during school term-time, this option would require to be packaged with another site to account for mobility hub operations during school holidays only. Therefore, a package of the high school with the land adjacent to the proposed Tesco (Option 14) is the emerging preferred combined option, although packaging with Land south of the burial ground (Option 1) may also be a possibility.

7.2 As the current report is a desktop study, all emerging preferred options have been considered at a high level and informed by the data provided/available at the time of the study.

Members are asked to note that requirements and priorities for the mobility hub may change between this report, and the future delivery of a mobility hub, and that all shortlisted options may remain viable possibilities to be informed by further technical work and stakeholder discussions.

7.3 However, with the report identifying emerging preferred options, **Members are asked to agree** at this stage that officers should further explore the deliverability of these options, to better understand specific technical requirements and factors, such as feasibility of land acquisition, or the initial opinion of key stakeholders, and report back to this Committee.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 14 May 2026

Author: David Swanson, Project Officer (Active Travel)

Background Papers: None

Appendices: None