

Notice of meeting and agenda

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

2.00 pm Wednesday, 20th January, 2021

Virtual Meeting - via Microsoft Teams

This is a public meeting and members of the public are welcome to watch the webcast live on the Council's website

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1. Order of Business

- 1.1 Including any notices of motion and any other items of business submitted as urgent for consideration at the meeting.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.

3. Deputations

- 3.1 If any.

4. Minutes

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------|
| 4.1 | Minute of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum of 27 October 2020 – submitted for approval as a correct record | 5 - 16 |
| 4.2 | Minute of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee of 8 September 2020 – submitted for approval as a correct record | 17 - 24 |

5. Regional Park Issues

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------|
| 5.1 | Operational update - Verbal Report by the Senior Natural Heritage Officer | |
| 5.2 | Managing Irresponsible Wild Camping and Associated Anti-Social Behaviours at Harlaw - Report by the Executive Director of Place | 25 - 44 |
| 5.3 | Report on Sustainable Transport and Active Travel to the Pentland Hills Regional Park - Report by the Executive Director of Place | 45 - 66 |

- 5.4** Report on Upgrading and Expansion Options of the Principal Car Parks in the Pentland Hills Regional Park - Report by the Executive Director of Place 67 - 98
- 5.5** Introduction of Mandatory Parking Charges at the Pentland Hills Regional Park Principal Car Parks - Report by the Executive Director of Place 99 - 114

6. Any Other Urgent Committee Business

- 6.1** Farmers and Landowners – Any Other Items they would like to see in the Consultative Forum Agenda

7. Dates of Next Meetings

- 7.1** Dates for future meetings –
- | | |
|-------------------------|--------|
| PHRP Consultative Forum | T.B.C. |
| PHRP Joint Committee | T.B.C. |

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee Members

Voting Members

The City of Edinburgh Council: Councillors Neil Gardiner (Convener), Graeme Bruce, and Ricky Henderson.

Midlothian Council: Councillors Russell Imrie, Kelly Parrie and Pauline Winchester.

West Lothian Council: Councillor Damian Timson.

Non-voting members:

Scottish Water: Alan Fail.

Scottish Natural Heritage: Janice Winning.

East Lothian Council (to be nominated).

Farming: Bob Barr (NFU).

Landowning: Clare Sturla (SLE).

Information about the Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

The Joint Committee is responsible for the funding and governance of the Regional Park and comprises elected members from the constituent local authorities covering the area of the Regional Park, and other public bodies with an interest in the area, and a representative each from the farming and landowning interests. The Joint Committee meets at least twice each year.

Further information

If you have any questions about the agenda or meeting arrangements, please contact Blair Ritchie, Committee Services, City of Edinburgh Council, Waverley Court, Business Centre 2.1, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh EH8 8BG Tel 0131 529 4085, e-mail [blair.ritchie@edinburgh.gov.uk/](mailto:blair.ritchie@edinburgh.gov.uk)

A copy of the agenda and papers for this meeting will be available for inspection prior to the meeting at the main reception office, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh.

The agenda, minutes and public reports for this meeting and all the main Council committees can be viewed online by going to

<https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>.

Minutes

Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum

3.30 pm on Tuesday 27 October 2020 - Held by Microsoft Teams

Present:

Councillors Gardiner (in the chair), Henderson, (The City of Edinburgh Council), Winchester (Midlothian Council), Timson (West Lothian Council); Robert Barr (SNFU), Graham Barr (Easter Bavelaw Farm), Hamish Clark (Friends of the Pentlands), Charlie Cummins, (Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust) Clare Sturla, (Scottish Land Estates), Alastair Salveson (Landowner), Norman Tinlin (Fairmilehead Community Council Secretary), John Wright, and Jim McComb (Malleny Angling).

Michael Rummey and Jenny Cowan, (East Side Farm), Mark Hartrey, (Carnethy Bowling Club), Patricia Kennedy (Spittal Farm), Emma Galloway (Balerno Village Trust), Lyndsay Brown (NFU Scotland), Susan and Alistair Cowan (East Side Farm), John Bruce (Bonaly Scout Centre), Ian Gotts (Colinton Amenity Association).

In Attendance:

Chris Alcorn (West Lothian Council), David Jamieson, Jessica Morgado, Victor Partridge, Tommy McManmon, Justin Venton, Meryl Norris, and Blair Ritchie (City of Edinburgh Council).

1. Minutes

Decision

The minutes of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum of 22 February 2019 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

2. Operational update

Jessica Morgado (the Senior Natural Heritage Officer) provided a short introduction to the service. She outlined the structure, indicating that the team was funded by 3 Local Authorities: The City of Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian Councils. This comprised of a Regional Park Manager (post vacant), a 1 Senior Natural Heritage Officer and 3.5 FTE Natural Heritage Officers.

Their role was to guide and assist all stakeholders in the sustainable management of the PHRP's changing environment in a way which supported communities living and working within the PHRP, promoting responsible access, developing public understanding of the mixed land use resource and conserving and enhancing the PHRP's landscape, cultural, historic and natural heritage.

Donation scheme

- The PHRP covered an area of 10,000 hectares, with over 100km (62 miles) of waymarked paths.
- There were approximately 600,000 visitors/year, with walking, cycling, horse riding and fishing as just a few of the recreational activities.
- The funds raised via the Donation scheme were used only for new 'added value' projects on the ground, and not for the day-to-day running of the Service. These included:
 - Path construction and maintenance
 - Signage and waymarking
 - Installation of access gates
 - Habitat improvements for wildlife
 - Improvement of facilities at Harlaw visitor centre and other popular sites

Before Covid-19

- New PHRP website & regular Facebook posts via PHRP page
- Seasonal signage such as "ground nesting birds", "lambing" etc
- PHRP Green Flag (new flag coming soon)
- Volunteer Ranger Service
- Wildlife surveys and public events program
- Access and habitat improvement projects
- Harlaw: Doors Open Day 2019 / Annual Livestock Worrying campaign / Responsible access event / Operation Owl / Hooked on Harlaw
- Flotterstone Glen: livestock awareness events in association with Penicuik Police

Since Covid-19

- Pictures of long lines of traffic, messy campsite and fly-tipping were illustrated

The Convener thanked the Senior Natural Heritage Officer for her overview. This showed how important the Regional Park was to peoples' physical and mental wellbeing. He congratulated the Park Rangers and all the partners including the police Scotland for their work.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- The Park Rangers were overrun and were not capable of doing their work, because of the lack of staff and resources. This was impacting on the service provided and placing an additional burden on the police and land managers.
- More funding would be beneficial, but council budgets were under even more pressure, with the current Covid crisis, and difficult choices had to be made. The Police and staff had limited resources and it was necessary to work with other partners to address the situation pragmatically.

Decision

To note the update.

3. Pentlands Woodland, Habitat and Access Proposals

Charlie Cummins (Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust) provided a verbal update on the Pentlands Woodland, Habitat and Access Proposals. He gave an update on the work of the Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust (ELGBT). It was hoped that there would soon be some funding available. Some funding was awarded in 2010 and work was undertaken. They had considered 5 priorities and focused on 10 projects.

There was further funding to produce a detailed proposal for the northeast slopes, part of that was identified for woodland expansion and four areas were being considered. As a result of this work, planting was undertaken in various sites. However, since then, there was not a large amount of new woodland created in that vicinity. Scottish Forestry (SF) wanted to support the ELGBT to try to look at new sites and to promote the grant funding that was available. National targets for the SF had been increased and they had only three years to increase their planting by 5%. He had a proposal with SF to work with a consultant, to carry out projects that might have been neglected. He was working on that piece of work at present and was hoping that they would soon get the funding confirmed. He had held discussions with Chris Alcorn (West Lothian Council) and he needed further discussions to take place.

He then provided an update on the Pentlands to Portobello Access Feasibility Study that the ELGBT undertook in the previous year. This route comprised of Swanston to Portobello and was mainly off road. There was also the proposal with NatureScot to identify areas of green network, (for that) and would probably prioritise the southern end of the route.

The last topic was access and other issues there were within the Pentlands, including the lack of investment and the number of people using routes. They undertook an access audit and identified £2-3m of work that was required. They were considering the Heritage Lottery Fund, but a number of schemes had been delayed, because of Covid. He had a meeting arranged with the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland. Their

priority was on employability and training. Previously, the East of Scotland did have much youth unemployment, therefore, opportunities had been quite limited. But, unfortunately, this had changed and it would be now possible to take forward that piece of work.

The Convener thanked Charlie Cummins for the update. It was a concern that youth unemployment might rise because of Covid and looked forward to a further update.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- That liaison took place with landowners when planting trees through a consultant.
- That planning permission was not required for woodland planting, although sometimes, problems had been experienced.
- Planning authorities would be consulted as part of the process

Decision

Farmers/landowners to liaise with Charlie Cummins through the ELGBT and he could put them in contact with a consultant, for the purpose of tree planting.

4. Car parks upgrade grant application to Visit Scotland

The Natural Heritage Officers provided a presentation on the Car Parks upgrade grant application to Visit Scotland. These proposals formed one of the grant applications to the Visit Scotland Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. A fund for Local Authorities and National Park Authorities to make improvements at popular visitor locations to meet community and visitor needs. This included the following:

Parking Issues

- Demand regularly exceeded availability
- Poor parking within the car parks
- Displacement occurred onto access tracks and neighbouring roads:
 - Impeded access for emergency vehicles and farm machinery
 - Created unsafe access for non-motorised users e.g. pedestrians/cyclists/horse riders
 - Put pressure on residential access
 - Damaged road verges

Proposed Solutions

- Improve car park layout/bay marking at: Harlaw, Threipmuir, Bonaly and Flotterstone

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- Improve signage and one-way traffic flow
- Provide more blue badge spaces
- Install electronic barrier to prevent misuse of Flotterstone Glen road.
- Some potential to expand capacity:
 - BONALY– surface the overflow parking area
 - HARLAW – remove parking on the access track and provide spaces in an extended car park area. Provide passing places and a segregated path for non-motorised users on access track.
 - FLOTTERSTONE – Provide segregated access path for non-motorised users on access road to car park.
 - THREIPMUIR – extend current car parking area.

Parking: CONSULTATION HUB

YOUR VIEWS

“Do you think there is adequate parking provision at the four principle car parks in the Pentland Hills Regional Park? YES /NO / NOT SURE

- Harlaw
- Threipmuir
- Bonaly
- Flotterstone

Do you support the proposal to improve parking at the four principle car parks in the Pentland Hills Regional park? YES / NO / NOT SURE

- Please give your comments on this proposal”

Path links: ISSUES

- Access roads were narrow with no pavements and heavily used by vehicular traffic
- Limited accessible paths to the busiest sites
- Existing paths were informal and not maintained
- Existing paths not signposted and not well known by visitors

Path links: PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- RTIF criteria: path upgrades up to 500m to/from car parks and scenic areas
- Offered the opportunity to upgrade the following:
 - Harlaw - through trees along Bavelaw burn to Harlaw road
 - Bonaly Country Park – through trees alongside access road at top car park
 - Flotterstone –through trees from car park towards reservoir

Path upgrades: CONSULTATION HUB

“YOUR VIEWS

- Would you like to see more path links into the Regional Park? YES / NO / NOT SURE
- Would you use a path instead of a vehicle to access the Regional Park? YES /NO / NOT SURE
- Please give your comments on this proposal.”

Signage: ISSUES

- Recreational use of reservoirs had increased significantly in recent years and could result in conflict between user groups
- Lack of signage on site explaining Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) responsibilities in relation to use of open water
- Lack of signage highlighting water safety

Signage: PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Produce new information panels that illustrate responsible access rights to open water
- Produce new water safety signage

Decision

See decisions after item 6.

5. Toilets and Eco-Campsite Proposals and Grant Application to Visit Scotland

The Natural Heritage Officers provided a presentation non-Toilets and Eco-Campsite Proposals and Grant Application to Visit Scotland. It was explained that these proposals formed one of the grant applications to the Visit Scotland Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. This included the following:

Camping

- ISSUES
 - There had been increasing problems in recent months and years with antisocial camping behaviour. This had resulted in extensive littering, unattended woodland fires, toileting mess and underage drinking, especially at Harlaw, Bonaly, Clubbiedean and Glencorse reservoirs.

- PROPOSED SOLUTION
 - The creation of a small eco-campsite on the shore of Harlaw Reservoir with dedicated fire bowls and toilets. No more than 8-10 camping areas.
 - The creation of a Warden or Ranger position to staff campsite and enforce Park Management Rules around rest of reservoir (no camping, no fires)
- CONSULTATION HUB
 - “YOUR VIEWS - Do you see the proposed eco-campsite with new Warden position as a viable solution to anti-social camping behaviour? YES / NO / NOT SURE - Please also give us your comments on this proposal.”

Toilets

- ISSUES
 - There had been problems with toileting mess increasing over the past few months and years at Harlaw, Threipmuir, Bonaly and Flotterstone Glen. This had resulted in human excrement and toilet paper being visible from woodland paths, posing a danger to visitors, their children and dogs, and wildlife.
- PROPOSED SOLUTION
 - The installation of 8 new toilets at the above four car parks, plus 2 toilets at the proposed eco campsite.
 - These would be zero-discharge waterless toilets requiring pump-outs approximately every six months.
 - There would be a proposed charge of approximately 50p per use, using hands-free card payment.
 - Takings from toilets would pay for pump-outs and a daily cleaning regime.
- CONSULTATION HUB
 - “YOUR VIEWS - Do you agree with the proposal to install two toilets at each of four car parks, with a charge to pay for cleaning and maintenance? YES / NO / NOT SURE - Please let us know any comments you have.”

Decision

See decisions after item 6.

6. Introducing Car Parking Charges at the Principal Car Parks

The Natural Heritage Officers gave a presentation on the proposal for introducing car parking charges at the principal car parks. The background to the proposed scheme of introducing car parking was outlined.

- PHRP car parks were currently free to park in, unlike most other similar destinations
- There had been proposals in the past to charge which had been rejected due to fears of displacement parking on main roads such as the A702
- The Regional Park was struggling to make ends meet following years of Council cut-backs.
- **SOLUTIONS**
 - Displacement parking could be minimised by creation of Clearway on A702 (DONE) and double-yellow lines around other car parks (currently lobbying for this)
 - Charging should be done in such a way that it did not disrupt traffic flow at entrances to car parks, and allowed essential vehicles access without charging them
 - Funds could be used for maintenance of car parks and Regional Park footpaths and infrastructure
 - investigate the creation of a permit scheme for regular visitors such as anglers
 - Investigate use of a third-party contractor to collect parking charges would minimise set-up costs. This contractor would keep monies from parking fines only
- **CONSULTATION HUB**
 - “YOUR VIEWS - Do you support the Regional Park charging a small amount for car parks (roughly £2 per visit)? YES / NO / NOT SURE - Would you support the introduction of an annual charging scheme similar to a residents’ permit? YES / NO / NOT SURE - Would you support monies from such a scheme being used to support the infrastructure of the Regional Park? YES / NO / NOT SURE - Please let us know any comments you have on proposals COMMENTS”

The Convener thanked the officers for the three presentations, which showed good teamwork. Following the presentations, discussion took place and the following points were made:

The effect of increasing the size of car parks.

- Increased traffic and pressure on roads.

- The possible ruination of natural habitats.

The Consultation process

- More input was required from people who worked in the Regional Park.
- This exercise was meant to ascertain opinion to inform the Council.
- It was not the case that all visitors wanted unlimited parking
- The service had limited funding and was trying to progress matters.

Current parking issues

- The negative impact of there being insufficient parking.
- The need to consider the views of visitors.
- To reduce the number of cars by measures such as improved paths.
- Double yellow lines were ineffective and clear ways might be better.

Current facilities inadequate were inadequate

- The approach to solve issues creatively was welcomed.
- The service understood the frustration of the farmers and the public.
- The present situation was not sustainable, and progress was necessary.

The needs of Balerno Residents

- A parking fee might deter some of them from visiting the Pentlands.
- A pass for these residents should be considered.
- Other local residents might also want special parking permits.

Measures to improve situation

- Recommendations to the Transport and Environment Committee.
- These would include the creation of pavements and speed restrictions.
- These would have to be within the park boundaries.
- Speed limits would impede farm traffic.
- Landowners would not want unauthorised barriers on private roads.

Contractor levies

- Contractors managing the car park might be encouraged to levy fines.
- Contractors might be the most practical way of managing the car park.
- Any money raised from charges would go into the park.
- Various options were being considered.

Parking fees

- Residents might pay an annual fee and might not have access.
- People could be informed in advance when the car park was full.
- It would be advantageous to impose a greater charge for the whole day.

- An “app” for car parking would be beneficial.

More support from rangers required

- It was beneficial to encourage people into the Regional Park.
- Greater numbers required more support from rangers over the weekend.
- The service did not have the numbers to make a rota work effectively.
- Greater access should not be encouraged without more ranger support.
- Landowners needed the service to help to manage the ecology of park.

Funding issues

- The regional park would be part of operational restructuring.
- Over the next few years, there would be probably less funding.
- Additional revenue and car parking revenue would help with this.
- There were other options to consider as well as car park charges.
- There could be match funding from Visit Scotland.
- They would provide 70% of funding, with the Service providing 30%.

The effect of greater visitor numbers

- The service was not encouraging more access.
- It was trying to manage the visitor numbers.
- They were trying to work with landowners to manage these.
- It was claimed that visitors were not being encouraged.
- A recent a mass cycle event, seemed contrary to this assertion.
- Farmers were having to deal with the public more and neglecting farming.

Response to consultation

- There should be more clarity when responses were received.

The Convener indicated that as the current situation was untenable, it was necessary to carry out a consultation and find solutions. The Council had to take all views into consideration. They did not want more cars in the Regional Park, but it was necessary to generate more income and to avoid a “rutted paths” situation. Therefore, an adequate level of car parking and active routes was required. He was aware of the impact of traffic on farmers, when they were moving machinery. Farmers should take part in the consultation hub, or through address provided by the Senior Natural Heritage Officer. He wanted to thank officers for their hard work and everyone who had contributed to the work of the Regional Park, during such a difficult time.

Decision

- 1) David Jamieson (Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries Manager) to identify people’s location who were responding to the consultation.

- 2) To note that some of respondents might be from outside Edinburgh and it would be helpful to capture that when making a decision.
- 3) To note that some of the revenue from parking fees, that could be used to police anti-social behaviour in the Pentlands.
- 4) Members to e-mail the Convener and the Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries Manager and the Natural Heritage Officer directly, on their views on the introduction of parking charges.
- 5) To consider having signage to instruct dog walkers not to permit their dogs to foul land.
- 6) To consider having new water safety signage along reservoirs on code of conduct.
- 7) Members to e-mail Natural Heritage directly, at their website address, to lend their support for the Clearway on A702. The Senior Natural Heritage Officer provided the e-mail address.
- 8) The Senior Natural Heritage Officer to get the responses to the consultation for the next meeting of the Joint Committee.
- 9) Tommy McMahon (Natural Heritage Officer) to check out the possible introduction of an app for parking charges.

7. Dates for Future Meetings

Dates for future meetings were as follows:

Joint Committee T.B.C.

Consultative Forum T.B.C.

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Minutes

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

12.00 Noon, Tuesday 8 September 2020 – Held by Microsoft Teams

Present:

Voting Members:

City of Edinburgh Council – Councillors Gardiner (Convener), Bruce (items 1-3) and Doran (substituting for Councillor Henderson).

Midlothian Council – Councillor Winchester.

West Lothian Council – Councillor Timson

Non-Voting Members:

National Farmers Union – Bob Barr

Scottish Land and Estates – Clair Stula

Scottish Natural Heritage: Janice Winning

In attendance:

Inspector Murray Tait (Police Scotland), James Kinch (Midlothian Council), Chris Alcorn (West Lothian Council (Planning)) Charlie Cummins (Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust), David Jamieson, Jessica Morgado, and Blair Ritchie (City of Edinburgh Council).

1. Minute

Decision

To approve the minute of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee of 24 February 2020 as a correct record.

2. Operation Boxy

Murray Tait (Police Scotland) provided an update on Operation Boxy. He explained about the situation over the last few months. There had been calls in relation to residents around the Balerno area, where there had been irresponsible parking, with drivers using the area for longer than one hour. The national situation with Covid took the Police off guard, which included people visiting open spaces and anti-social behaviour. This had been quite an issue, especially during the warm weather.

Following on from a multi-agency meeting, the Police worked to prevent further instances of irresponsible use. It was hoped to have a multi-agency response, to educate users and to robustly enforce legalisation. There was a need to increase police visibility, to develop clear lines of communication and for all partners to feed information. It was hoped to make good use of social media, to make the best use of cycle and foot and mountain patrols, and to reduce the carbon footprint. The main bulk of the team was made up of the community team at Oxfords and a group of probationers from Police College. There had also been a request for special constables. Throughout this time, there had been joint patrols and contact had been made with water bailiffs. There was engagement with various campsites, which included six dispersals mostly around campsites. They would be undertaking this operation again next year, when appropriate.

The Convener thanked Murray Tait for his report. This had been a consolidated operation and hopefully the public would be aware that the police and other agencies would act to help prevent antisocial behaviour, to make the hills safe. It might be necessary to scale this up for next year.

Decision

That the Joint Committee would work with the Police in future to ensure that lessons had been learned and there would be progress to ensure peoples' safety in the hills.

3. Managing Increased Vehicular Access and irresponsible Camping in the Pentland Hills Regional Park

David Jamieson (The Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries Manager) reported on managing increased vehicular access and irresponsible camping in the Pentland Hills Regional Park. He indicated that the recent health crisis had highlighted a range of growing recreational and traffic management pressures on the Pentland Hills Regional Park (PHRP), notably irresponsible wild camping, anti-social behaviour, and a significant rise in the use of car parks, causing overflow onto adjacent access roads.

The report by the Executive Director of Place addressed these issues, proposing a series of actions that if implemented would help limit their impact on the sustainable use of and access to the Regional Park. The specific measures proposed related to the Regional Park were: enhanced traffic and parking controls, creating additional off-road parking provision, development of active travel alternatives, creation of a formal eco-camping facility with toileting provision, enforcement of Park Management Rules, and the introduction of parking charges to raise revenue to pay for these specific measures.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

(A) ENHANCED TRAFFIC AND PARKING CONTROLS

- There should an appropriate speed limit imposed, considering the narrow twisting road and the range of users.
- There should be feedback from the consultation.
- What were the major challenges in West Lothian caused by traffic?
- How it would be possible to influence the entrance points.
- What could be done to facilitate parking.
- Encouraging walking was important but some people needed cars.
- Balerno should be one of the gateways into the Pentlands.
- Paths/pavements should be provided to facilitate access.
- It was necessary to ensure traffic flow and stop people parking on verges.
- There should be the provision of buses for the elderly and disabled.

Bob Barr indicated that dropping speed limits might not help as it was necessary to help the flow of traffic. People might just ignore an excessive number of double yellow lines, and it might be better to put up signs prohibiting parking on verges and cutting verges. It was also necessary to provide buses for the elderly and disabled.

(B) UPGRADING CAR PARKS

- There were difficulties with access to Bonaly and Harlaw Car Parks.
- Car parking was important.

(C) CREATION OF A FORMAL ECO-CAMPING FACILITY WITH TOILETING PROVISION,

- Excessive camping caused damage to trees.
- The toilet facility at Harlaw should be re-opened or other options considered.
- There would be a council wide decision on the re-opening of toilets made at the Transport and Environment Committee on 6 October.
- Families should be allowed safe access and dangerous activities stopped.
- The campsite presence helped to informally police activities.
- Funding might be generated by introducing mandatory charging for parking. There had to be a certain level of income to make investment.
- Any income would be ring fenced for the park.
- It was necessary to ensure spaces for customers paying an annual levy.
- Consideration could be given to devices such as car counters on phone apps to establish the availability of spaces.
- It might be possible to get input from the universities for this issue.

Decision

- 1) Proposed traffic management measures be referred to the relevant Committees of Midlothian and the City of Edinburgh Councils.
- 2) A business case for the upgrading and expansion of principal car parks be presented at the next Joint Committee meeting.

- 3) A report be submitted to the next Joint Committee meeting exploring sustainable access and active travel opportunities.
- 4) A business case for establishing an eco-campsite be presented at the next Joint Committee meeting.
- 5) A business case for introducing mandatory parking charges be presented at the next Joint Committee meeting.

6) ENHANCED TRAFFIC AND PARKING CONTROLS

- a) For enhanced traffic and parking controls, Jessica Morago (the Senior Natural Heritage Officer) to check out if it was possible to restrict access after certain times, when it would be busy for the farming community and arrange bus shuttles and carry out a consultation on to see if there was an economic case.
- b) The Senior Natural Heritage Officer to liaise with officers to determine what measures were required out with the parks remit to make this work.
- c) Park Management to liaise with Transport Scotland to introduce a clear way along A702.
- d) The Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries Manager to take the themes of upgrading the car parks (and promoting active travel), to look at these again and come back to the Joint Committee with a business case.
- e) The Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries Manager to action Bob Barr's comments on this issue (see item 3a)

7) UPGRADING CAR PARKS

The Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries Manager to consider upgrading car parks through the consultation process, and to ensure that they were fit for purpose for 21st century.

8) CREATION OF A FORMAL ECO-CAMPING FACILITY WITH TOILETING PROVISION.

- a) The Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries Manager to investigate further the creation of a formal eco-camping facility with toileting provision and come back to the next meeting and then have a consultation exercises.
- b) The Convener to e-mail the link to Janice Winning's comment and get feedback.
- c) To arrange a consultative forum with landowners in October to discuss the various themes and have a "wrap up" committee in November to reflect on the consultation.

4. Update on Heritage Lottery Fund Pentland Path Project

Charlie Cummins (Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust) gave update on the Heritage Lottery Fund Pentland Path Project. It was necessary to determine the source of funding. Car parking charges was a significant mechanism for generating income. Work was on hold because lottery funding was paused, except for Covid response work. He had held discussions with Scottish Forestry before the Covid Pandemic. They wanted to work in partnership up with other bodies, to make Pentlands a climate park and to look at the potential for biodiversity and improve access. There was the potential to include mitigation approaches which would also incorporate health benefits. Edinburgh Airport might be a sponsor and this was the type of activity that agencies might become involved with. Discussions were taking place with Nature Scotland. He would provide updates at the next meeting of the Joint Committee. Discussions had also been taking place on the Pentlands to Portobello route, involving Sustrans and local authority funding.

Discussion took place and the following points were made.

- The Pentlands were near a large population of about 750,000 people.
- If investment could be generated, this would benefit Edinburgh and the Lothians.
- Forestry restoration and peatland restoration were both important and this should be included in discussions with forestry partners.
- The Council should be committed to provide funding.
- It was necessary to find different match funders
- That peatland restoration and carbon capture was important.
- Nature Scotland had expertise on peatland.
- Work was taking place with landowners.
- Flood prevention was being checked out.
- The generation of revenue could be used to obtain money from other funders.
- There was a strong case for a lottery funding application that investing in the Park would help with peoples wellbeing and save money in the long term.

Decision

To take action for flood prevention and to work with Charlie Cummins and all other partners to maximise what could be achieved.

5. Pentland Hills Regional Park Management Update

The Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries Manager provided an update on the Pentland Hills Regional Park Management. This included the regional park team and where it stood in the structure, There was formal consultation place function earlier this year, but that was suspended to consider the wider council review. The adaptation and renewal program had been established. This was a council wide review of services, with new structures being planned. The initial proposals would be presented next October and the Regional Park Team would be part of that. There might be changes later this year.

Discussion took place and the following points were made:

- Whether there had been any changes due to Covid in West Lothian and Midlothian Councils.
- That there had been no new developments in West Lothian Council.
- Discussions were taking place regarding restructuring in Midlothian Council.

The Convener indicated that the Ski Centre would be getting substantial investment from the Council. There had been discussions about the possible installation of a Lothian bus route to the Ski Centre, which would benefit visitors. With investment in the Ski Centre, there might be renewed focus on the park.

Decision

When the Parks, Greenspace and Cemeteries Manager had the information on the restructuring and review of council services and the place of the Regional Park Team in the structure, he would share it with the Joint Committee.

6. Strategic Management Plan - Update on the Final Draft

The Senior Natural Heritage Officer reported on the Strategic Management Plan Update. She indicated that the time factor was essential, the team was currently focussing on the Covid lockdown and she would provide a final report at next meeting of the Joint Committee.

The Convener thanked the Officer for her timeous work on the report in relation to camping and would look forward to the update on the Strategic Management Plan at next meeting of the Joint Committee.

He also drew attention to the good work of the Park Team and hoped that any restructuring would increase its ability to work for the park, taking into account the wide use of the park.

Decision

To note the update.

7. Farmers and Landowners – Any Other Items they would like to see in the Consultative Forum Agenda

The Convener indicated that he would consider any items submitted for the Consultative Forum.

Decision

Bob Bar to e-mail Committee Services or the Convener with any matters to be considered at the Consultative Forum.

8. Dates for Future Meetings

To note the timelines required for the consultation and for Committee Services to arrange a meeting of the Consultative forum in October and the Joint Committee in November.

Decision

PHRP Consultation Forum – To be confirmed.

PHRP Joint Committee – To be confirmed

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Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

2pm, Wednesday, 20 January 2021

Managing irresponsible wild camping and associated anti-social behaviours at Harlaw.

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	Pentland Hills
Council Commitments	

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Committee agrees engagement, enforcement and eco-campsite measures to reduce the impact of antisocial activities caused by irresponsible camping at Harlaw.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Managing irresponsible wild camping and associated anti-social behaviours at Harlaw.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The recent health crisis has highlighted a range of growing recreational and traffic management pressures on the Pentland Hills Regional Park (PHRP), notably irresponsible wild camping and with it a rise in anti-social behaviour at reservoir sites including Harlaw reservoir. This report addresses the impact of irresponsible wild camping and outlines the process of creating a formal eco-camping facility with toileting provision and enforcement of Park Management Rules to manage this growing issue at Harlaw reservoir.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Pentland Hills Regional Park has been growing in popularity over the years, with significantly more visitors accessing its principal beauty spots during the current Covid-19 pandemic. The last survey conducted in 2005/06 estimated 600,000+ annual visitors to the Park.
- 3.2 The work of the Regional Park team is dedicated to providing visitor and land management services that allow people to enjoy the landscape and wildlife of the Pentland Hills without damaging its environment. Services provided by the team enable people to engage with nature, take physical exercise and participate in outdoor recreational activities. Protection of the high-quality upland environment that people come to enjoy is therefore a key role for the Regional Park.
- 3.3 People have wild camped for many years within the Regional Park. When carried out in small numbers, for short periods, and with respect for the local environment, this has caused few problems. In recent years however there has been an increase in the number of people camping, particularly on weekends with accompanying good weather. This has escalated further following the Coronavirus outbreak, with many now visiting in larger groups and exhibiting significant levels of antisocial behaviour. This is a trend that seems to be occurring across Scotland and the UK. Evidence from staff engaging with these groups is that some are visiting from other parts of Scotland specifically to camp in these areas. Most of this activity is focused

in the woodlands around the City of Edinburgh Council owned reservoirs at Harlaw, Threipmuir and Bonaly, and within the lower woodland area of Bonaly Country Park.

- 3.4 The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 states that people can exercise access rights for recreational purposes. Although it does not define "recreational purposes" the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) gives examples of active pursuits, which includes wild camping. Guidance on wild camping states that this type of camping is lightweight, done in small numbers and only for short periods in any one place, and that the "Leave No Trace" ethos applies. Although wild camping can be carried out wherever access rights apply, much of what we are now seeing does not fit with this guidance.
- 3.5 Many campers are leaving significant amounts of litter, including human waste, sanitary items and toilet paper. Campers are also sourcing wood for campfires from living trees and when accessing the water to swim are impacting on recreational anglers who pay to fish on the reservoirs (Appendix 2).
- 3.6 Regional Park officers engage with all campers they meet to explain what responsible use of the countryside means and to encourage them to remove all rubbish and leave no trace. Where litter is left, staff and volunteers then clear this away. This is a considerable drain on effective use of staff and volunteers time to pursue other park duties and projects. Fire lighting within woodland is actively discouraged, and during periods of high fire risk this extends to all open fires within the Regional Park. Responsible use messages are also promoted using the Pentland Hills website and Facebook page, alongside posters and signs on site. Recent campaigns have highlighted ways to camp and toilet responsibly.
- 3.7 There are only two public toilets facilities serving PHRP – at Flotterstone car park and Harlaw House visitor centre. Covid- 19 saw these public toilets shut, with Flotterstone, operated as part of a café, reopening whilst Harlaw visitor centre has remained closed due to configuration and resourcing issues. Harlaw house visitor centre contains one toilet leading to a septic tank. Before Covid-19, officers observed that there were frequently long queues of people waiting to use this single toilet. It was used by recreational users, including "wild" campers. The toilet at Harlaw house visitor centre was not approved for reopening and remains closed.
- 3.8 Following an increase in antisocial behaviour at Harlaw reservoir and an attack on a voluntary water bailiff Police Scotland initiated a joint operation to tackle anti-social behaviour. PHRP officers, Water Bailiffs, Friends of the Pentland Hills, Scottish Water, elected representatives & Police Scotland all worked together to provide a joint approach as Operation Boxy, which ran from 8th - 30th August 2020. Further patrols were carried out on 19th September 2020 building on the initial partnership approach during Operation Boxy. 103 campsites were engaged, and 370 other engagements were made, leading to 14 dispersals.

4. Main report

- 4.1 A recognised strategy to reduce anti-social behaviour in an area is to increase the presence of responsible visitors, who often deter those who don't act responsibly. Establishing a formal, but low-level seasonal "eco-campsite" (Appendix 1) at Harlaw would provide responsible campers with adequate facilities between April-October; give a regular presence to deter irresponsible activities; raise income to help cover establishment and servicing costs; assist in applying Park Management Rules by offering a managed and inexpensive alternative to those seeking to camp in this beauty spot.
- 4.2 Section 112 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 empowers local authorities to make Park Management Rules for outdoor parks and green spaces under its management. Bonaly Country Park and both Harlaw and Threipmuir reservoirs also fall within the scope of the City of Edinburgh Council Park Management Rules, which prohibit (unless written permission has been given) lighting an open fire and camping within 1 mile of a public road.
- 4.3 Council Officers can instruct those breaking (or about to break) a rule to leave the park. However, enforcement requires the support of Police Scotland. Current staffing levels within the regional park service limits its ability to enforce the Park Management Rules as offences usually occur in the evening when there is a no staff presence to witness an offence.
- 4.4 Many of the current anti-social behaviours exhibited by some campers and other visitors (e.g. vandalism, urinating or defecating in circumstances causing annoyance to others) can already be addressed by Police Scotland using fixed penalty notices.
- 4.5 Section 12 of The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 sets out powers for local authorities to make byelaws. However, Scottish Government guidance states that these should only be considered after other management measures or advice have proven ineffective.
- 4.6 Although no license is required for a campsite in Scotland, the CEC Planning advice is to apply for planning permission. A planning permission application was submitted on 19 November 2020 as part of the Rural Transport and Infrastructure Funding bid prerequisite, itself submitted on 14 October 2020.
- 4.7 Recommended facilities are:
- Staff presence, to keep sites tidy, monitor usage and manage issues as bookings and payments to be processed by an online booking system.
 - Fire pits installed. Wood made available for purchase during the day. Tent pitch areas suitably set back from fire pits. Emergency fire / water buckets available next to each fire site.
 - Construction of a waterless toilet system (Appendix 3).
 - A water supply for dishwashing/drinking purposes.

4.8 Between 06/11/2020 to 04/12/2020 the Pentland Hills Regional Park held an online public engagement exercise. The engagement centred around the anti-social behaviour and traffic management problems exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Question 13 and 14 of the public engagement gathered information for the eco-campsite proposal.

4.9 Question 13 asked “Do you see the new Warden position with associated eco-campsite as a viable solution to anti-social camping behaviour?” There were 1855 responses.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	970	52%
No	358	19%
Not sure	527	28%
Not Answered	17	1%

4.11 Question 14 invited comments on this proposal. 1067 were received, which can be grouped into eight themes for and against the proposal. A small selection of comments to highlight each main theme is available in appendix 4.

- Recognition for the need to manage the camping at Harlaw reservoir after the abuse of the site, the impact on the environment and recreational use of other user groups.
- The restrictions associated with Covid-19 have exacerbated the situation in 2020.
- Displacement concern for other sites if Harlaw becomes a managed site with limited pitches.
- Preferences for an educational approach.
- Concern that one warden position would not be feasible or safe. Enforcement difficult for warden without Police type powers to deal with anti-social behaviour.
- Impact of managed campsite on Rights of Access to wild camp in the Pentlands.
- Charging may disadvantage those who cannot afford activities like wild camping that are traditionally free.
- An eco-campsite could provide a facility to enable people to access camping in a safer manner.

4.12 Composting toilets were initially investigated as a solution to outdoor toileting in the area. However, these have issues with removal of waste, as well as potential complications with urine outflow. Following discussion with Natsol, the UK’s foremost compost toilet manufacturer, we concluded that the Zero Discharge toilet is the one most appropriate to our needs. These toilets use no water or electricity. All waste goes into an enclosed tank below the ground. Ventilation ensures odour reduction. Contents require pumping out roughly every six months.

- 4.13 A funding application has been submitted to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) to resource the installation of the toilet facilities as part of an eco-campsite. The outcome of the funding will be known on 11th January 2021.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Determine outcome of eco-campsite planning application and proceed with securing resources for construction of facilities if approved.
- 5.2 Establish seasonal warden post(s) within PHRP staffing structure should business case for funding this position be supported by the City of Edinburgh Council's Workforce Panel.
- 5.3 Investigate with Police Scotland options for legal powers and/or joint working in order to successfully enable enforcement of Park Management Rules.
- 5.4 Investigate partnership working with Edinburgh High Schools. Design and deliver education programme prior to school holidays.
- 5.5 Install managed camping pitches with associated facilities: fire pit/wood, drinking water supply and toilet.
- 5.6 Determine rules associated with using the eco-campsite (e.g. music, group size, fires etc).
- 5.7 Investigate data protection rules in relation to patrols noting down contact tracing details for campers.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Creation of campsite including ground preparation, installation of fire pits, woodstore, info/warden point, signage has an estimated initial capital investment of £10,000.
- 6.2 Installation of mains water supply is estimated to cost £20,000.
- 6.3 Purchase of waterless toilets and payment system is estimated to cost £32,000.
- 6.4 Warden salary (April – October) = £14,000/ year.
- 6.5 Firewood supply: Investigate possibility for supply to come from CEC Forestry Service. Estimated initial cost £6,000.
- 6.6 H&S checks on trees and water supply cost covered in kind by CEC.
- 6.7 An RTIF funding application has been made to cover up to 70% of the cost for the installation of 10 waterless toilets (other locations are the principal car parks) and design/creation of the eco-campsite. The bid is worth £169,000 inc. VAT and in-kind element. The outcome of this funding bid will be known on 11th January 2021.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 An initial meeting to explore solutions was held with Ward members and stakeholder representatives on 5 August 2020.
- 7.2 PHRP Joint Committee held on 08 September 2020
- 7.3 PHRP Consultative Forum on 27 October 2020
- 7.4 PHRP Public Engagement Exercise from 06/11/2020 to 04/12/2020

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 “2005-06 Pentland Hills Visitor Survey”
- 8.2 The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
- 8.3 The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Eco campsite layout at Harlaw reservoir
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Images of impact caused by irresponsible camping behaviour
- 9.3 Appendix 3 – Natsol waterless toilet
- 9.4 Appendix 4 – Main themes and sample of comments from the Public Engagement comments on eco-campsite proposal
- 9.5 Appendix 5 – 2020 Public Engagement on the introduction of mandatory car park charges: Question 13 & 14

Appendix 1

Location of new eco-campsite area, Harlaw Reservoir

Pitches using pre-existing clearings or areas where minimal removal of scrubby vegetation and trees is required.



Appendix 2

Images of Harlaw Reservoir under pressure from problem camping, July 2020.



Above: large groups camping on the shores of Harlaw Reservoir.



Above: campsite, Harlaw Reservoir, 19th July 2020



Above: damage caused to trees by campers sourcing wood for fires



Above: Open defecation and toilet paper in the woodland surrounding Harlaw reservoir

Appendix 3

Diagram of workings of Natsol Zero Discharge toilet. Price quoted does not include building.

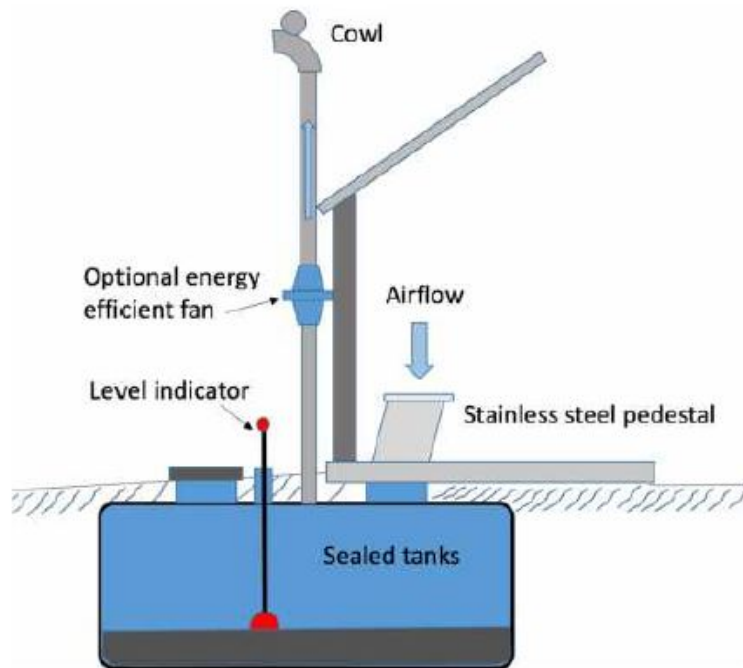


Information sheet for the Zero Discharge toilet

Each unit is made up of:

- Glass reinforced concrete tank measuring approx 3.5m x 1.1m x 1.8m high
- Toilet pedestal
- Emptying hatch
- Level indicator rods
- Passive or fan driven ventilation system dependant on site conditions
- Pedestal to tank connector

Cost per unit for the above specification is typically in the region £5,500 to £6000 depending on site conditions, ex VAT and delivery. Installation by client's contractor.



Units 5 & 6 Maesyllan Ent. Park, Llanidloes, Powys SY18 6YU

T 01686 412653 F 0870 6221384

info@natsol.co.uk www.natsol.co.uk

VAT no 869927743 Company no: 5624596

Appendix 4

A small selection of comments to highlight each main theme from the recent Public engagement.

Theme 1: Recognition for the need to manage the camping at Harlaw reservoir after the abuse of the site, the impact on the environment and recreational use of other user groups
<i>"Fully support any measure to discourage anti-social camping like that which has been seen over this past summer."</i>
<i>"Poss the best solution. Responsible wild campers will have been put off this location for some time and know of alternatives. Problem at Bonaly Reservoir too?"</i>
<i>"Whilst I'm not in favour of camping within our hills, by implementing a warden to overlook an 'eco campsite', surely this will be more favourable to the anti-social behaviour which has been going on recently."</i>
<i>"It's a shame that it has come to this as I have some concerns that a formal camping area would still be abused & used as a T in the Park style party area however this is potentially already happening at night"</i>
<i>"Personally, wild camping shouldn't be allowed especially in the Harlaw area. This year has been especially bad in all the beauty spots. The rubbish and human waste are beyond disgusting. Maybe with a small properly managed camp site and definitely more toilet facilities and definitely more wardens keeping an eye on things could be a much better solution"</i>
<i>"I think campers should "buy" or at least register on arrival and check back in with the warden on departure showing that they have left wherever they have camped as they found it. I think there is widespread acceptance of responsible camping and equal disappointment and annoyance at those who leave a mess. The key responsibility is to leave it as you find it not just pay a fee and imagine that clearing up is the warden's job because you've paid to camp."</i>
<i>"The anti-social behaviour this summer has been appalling and needs to be controlled for the enjoyment of the park. Provision of and upgrading of toilets should be a priority."</i>
<i>"This seems a good solution. As a regular user of the park, it was clear that anti-social camping was a major problem this summer. Providing some facilities is a sensible option."</i>
<i>"In the recent months it has become clear that wild camping is getting out of hand not only damaging the local environment but posing a threat to the safety of others in the area. I therefore think that the only way to allow some provision is to now formally control the camping and charge to support the costs of the provision. My only concern would be for the safety of any lone wardens if there are any large / antisocial groups"</i>
<i>"I think wild camping should continue to be allowed but there should a 24-hour warden or a team available to make sure this is done in a responsible way."</i>

Theme 2: The restrictions associated with Covid-19 have exacerbated the situation in 2020

“Wild camping was definitely a big issue in 2020. How much this was due to Covid-19 “5 mile” travel restrictions (unnecessarily) preventing people from travelling to other established camp grounds is unclear. Warden and camp ground seem sensible ideas”

“As a member of Carnethy Hill running club, I spend a lot of time in and around the Pentlands. This year, the amount of rubbish and mess left by irresponsible visitors has disgusted me. I see the role of a warden at Harlaw as essential, but also wardens who are employed to patrol the park and have the authority to issue fines to those who clearly have no respect for their surroundings, wildlife, or other visitors.”

“Hopefully the problems will fade after the pandemic, but it would be good to have better camping.”

“The drastic rise in the amount of campers has undoubtedly been caused by the COVID pandemic and associated restrictions, which hopefully will improve as vaccines become available. I agree that there is a need for a more permanent warden in order to deter camping, and unsociable behaviour but a knee jerk reaction to COVID in creating an area for more campers which will just increase the amount that wish to camp,(post COVID) and increase the amount of vehicles to car parks and more footfall. The idea of a small charge for both camping and use of toilet facilities is all very well for responsible people but unfortunately unrealistic because the majority of so called 'dirty campers;' will not pay and will continue to act in an unsociable manner.”

“I can understand why this is being proposed but given that this year has been exceptional due to Covid-19, it hopefully will not continue in similar vein beyond next year. I suspect things will revert to a more manageable level in the near future and that such measures as charging for camping and having a warden could be viewed as excessive restrictions.”

“I think where there is a will there is a way. This will not prevent wild camping. Covid has exacerbated this situation and once we are able to travel again this will not be such an issue.”

“This year has been exceptional with no foreign holidays/music festivals and people camping who are unlikely to camp in the future. A knee jerk reaction banning camping around any area of the Pentlands is more likely to affect genuine wild campers and is to be avoided at the moment unless the problems continue post Covid.”

Theme 3: Displacement concern for other sites if Harlaw becomes a managed site with limited pitches

“Think it is the only option. Why can't the police patrol the reservoirs? Will this just move the problem elsewhere?”

“How do you prevent the problem simply being displaced to somewhere else local?”

"My concern would be that by preventing unrestricted camping at Harlaw the problem will simply move somewhere else. But I agree that the desecration caused by thoughtless camping must be stopped."

"Risk that anti-social camping will still continue but elsewhere in park because these individuals do not respect the environment or that other people would need to pick up their mess - they don't care! Warden may need police back up initially!!"

"Seems sensible though I'm not sure whether a warden may just drive irresponsible campers to other locations. Purpose of the warden should not be to 'prevent camping' but to educate those who are not aware of how to camp responsibly."

"This would improve the situation at Harlaw; but the irresponsible would probably go elsewhere"

"But those intent on antisocial camping will not pay to use the site and will find somewhere else to go for free, thereby just moving the problem somewhere else rather than fixing it"

"This summer I saw people camping and setting fires amongst the trees at Bonaly reservoir. I also saw rubbish that had been left behind. An eco-camping area here is essential too, if you created a managed facility at Harlaw, the problem may just increase at Bonaly."

"I think this would drive the anti-social element elsewhere and so just move the problem on. I'd rather see resource applied to deal with the problem through education, fines or the like."

"Would people pay to camp at Harlaw when they could camp anywhere else in the Pentlands for free? Also, those that are "underage drinking" aren't going to pay to camp somewhere that they can't behave in an antisocial manner and drink/play music."

Theme 4: Preferences for an educational approach

"The situation needs to be policed in some way and there needs to be a staff presence. Not everyone will be in favour of paying for camping since part of the reason people go to the Pentlands is to "wild camp" for free. More education is required to help people understand what wild camping is and the warden should be involved in this."

"Irresponsible behaviour is growing as people who have not traditionally used the outdoors are doing so without respect. It takes time for that respect to develop. Also, consideration of current legislation of what constitutes wild camping is required. Wild camping is 'leave no trace' with 1-2 people pitching a tent to sleep...not pitching a gazebo and having a party."

"I think this needs to be done alongside education and encouragement to use the area, just use it responsibly. It is counterproductive to just try and ban access, which I think people may be worried about with the introduction of additional rules. They may see it as a slippery slope to more and more regulation. When in fact, open spaces should belong to all of us and if you encourage people to use them and appreciate them then they begin to act responsibly. But at the moment people are not behaving well so I think a warden is a good idea"

“The main problem in the park seems to be the anti-social behaviour of a minority of the visitors. In the long term this can only be improved by education which is a very slow process. It needs more "ranger" type staff at weekends. Perhaps the creation of another new post of part-time ranger with sole responsibility of patrolling the Park in addition to the single Heritage Officer on duty would help.”

“I think there should be a wariness of just treating the symptom and not the cause. Could there be better education of those who are the cause of the anti-social behaviour? Otherwise, it will only push the problem elsewhere.”

“Education, persuasion and " nudge" techniques may be more successful than direct approach and enforcement.”

“I would like to see an outdoors passionate warden who encourages and teaches visitors good things. I would not like to see this “policed”

“Sledgehammer to crack a nut. Set out several firepits and police responsible wild camping for a season. That would educate those that do not know how to respect the countryside and preserve the rights of use for those of us that do know how to behave appropriately.”

“I definitely think the presence of a Warden would help alleviate the problem though not necessarily be a lasting solution. Educating, and informing the general public about their rights and responsibilities under SOAC is a vital part of tackling the issues.”

“Need to balance this year with travel restrictions as being aberrative. It will likely displace camping and what is needed is much more education at many levels. A warden post to educate campers would be helpful and a good use of council funds.”

Theme 5: Concern that one warden position would not be feasible or safe. Enforcement difficult for warden without Police type powers to deal with anti-social behaviour

“I say yes, but this warden needs to have back up nearby for any protection that may be necessary. People don't like being told what they can and cannot do.”

“It's a good idea. But there might need to be 2 wardens on duty, for safety.”

“Only if the warden has some sort of legal enforcement power, otherwise they will be ignored”

“Is a sole warden at night safe? Would be concerned for aggressive/ antisocial behaviour.”

“I feel it would be unfair and unsafe to consider just one post of a warden. For example, how could this post be filled in consideration of equality issues where a young female or person with a disability might be seen as vulnerable in a situation like this.”

“Especially over summer, I've seen a lot of litter left by campers. I agree a warden would be a possible solution, but I also worry about the safety of the warden. If there is a large group

of campers who disagree with the warden what powers would the warden have to move them on?"

"The role of warden could almost be dangerous, considering the numbers in some of the camping groups. They would initially need the support of community police at least once every evening and available at brief notice by police radio as required."

"I would be concerned about the warden's safety. Many of the camping parties are large groups of young men drinking heavily."

"What authority would they have? I'm not sure it would work, and people might just ignore any requests to deal with anti-social behaviour. Unfortunately, the type of person who thinks it's ok to leave litter, camping detritus and worse, will not be the type of person who will take any notice of a warden I don't think."

"The people who created the mess and disruption last summer - including intimidation and violence - are not likely to stick to any rules and will camp where they like, as they did elsewhere in Scotland. A warden without police powers would be both ineffective and at risk of abuse and even personal injury."

"What powers would the Warden have? Could be a potentially dangerous job if operating at night confronting drugged or drunk campers. To seriously tackle irresponsible behaviour really needs a police response with court appearances and fines."

Theme 6: Impact of managed campsite on Rights of Access to wild camp in the Pentlands.

"I wouldn't want this to be extended elsewhere as eats into access rights."

"As much as I would like the tradition to continue I very much doubt this will be the case for quite a few years. Perhaps revisit in 5-10 years of rules can be relaxed"

"I'm concerned about a possible ban on all wild camping at Harlaw & how large an area this might cover as there are some very responsible wild campers who follow rules & leave no trace. If it's only immediate waterside areas that fine but wild camping needs to be allowed for those that walk further into the regional park. Generally, those who make a mess & disturbance are only interested in camping close to car park anyway. Please don't spoil it for the considerate quiet campers by having too wide an area where camping is banned"

"Yes, but may just encourage people to camp elsewhere in large groups. I would not want this organised campsite to prevent wild camping in other areas of the park - we have purposely sought out quieter places this summer."

"I see this as a sensible approach to address the small number of individuals who spoil it for others if they are forced to use this site. this however spoils it for the many users who camp here with the no trace ethos. I would however hope that this would not result in any banning of true wild camping in the wider regional park. There are many sensible users who camp in remote parts of the park as individual or a couple of people away from the usual busy thoroughfares and leave no trace and respect the park and the landowners. This should

continue to be possible and focus on tackling the social camping and anti-social behaviour hotspots."

"Responsible wild camping further afield should still be allowed. The actions of a few irresponsible idiots should not stop responsible, legal "leave no trace" camping."

"It is a good idea to have a formal area with toilet (this need not be a very expensive toilet, but should be similar to those in National Parks in New Zealand or USA, e.g. "long-drop" or composting etc. Despite having a formal area to camp. it is very important to not ban camping in the Pentlands - once a right is taken away it is hard to get it back and in Scotland, we have the right to wild camp. Education and policing are need to reduce anti-social behaviour."

"I think Covid & loss of holidays has increased the anti-social camping. As a responsible wild camper, I would be sad to see the loss of camping. A warden to monitor anti-social camping & an eco-camp site sound good, but I would hope to retain wild camping for responsible campers e.g. let warden know where we are going, donate but not camp in a fixed campsite with other people"

"It is really important to maintain the right for people to have access to the countryside and camp in Scotland. I would support a ranger and a small fee but there should not be strict camping 'zones' which remove an important freedom in Scotland"

Theme 7: Charging may disadvantage those who cannot afford it from accessing the Pentlands and activities like wild camping which are traditionally free

"I think as long as the cost of camping isn't enough to prohibit poorer families from camping then I think it's a good thing."

"I think this is the only way to deal with inconsiderate campers and those who don't treat the area with respect. I would say that the cost of the campsite needs to be small enough that it doesn't become an accessibility issue itself - the price cannot be unaffordable."

"yes, but must ensure displacement is avoided by making the camping accessible to low-waged. simple, robust facility"

"It may simply push the irresponsible campers to other parts of the national park. Perhaps the warden could work to encourage responsible camping and the police could move on people breaking the outdoor access code. Keep wild camping available to all, outdoors is one of the few resources available to low income people and families."

"I think it is shocking that open spaces are being stolen for the case of a small fee. Some parents take their kids camping and don't expect the fee when they have already spent so much on food and camping gear. Reconsider please"

Theme 8: An eco-campsite could provide a facility to enable people to access camping in a safer manner

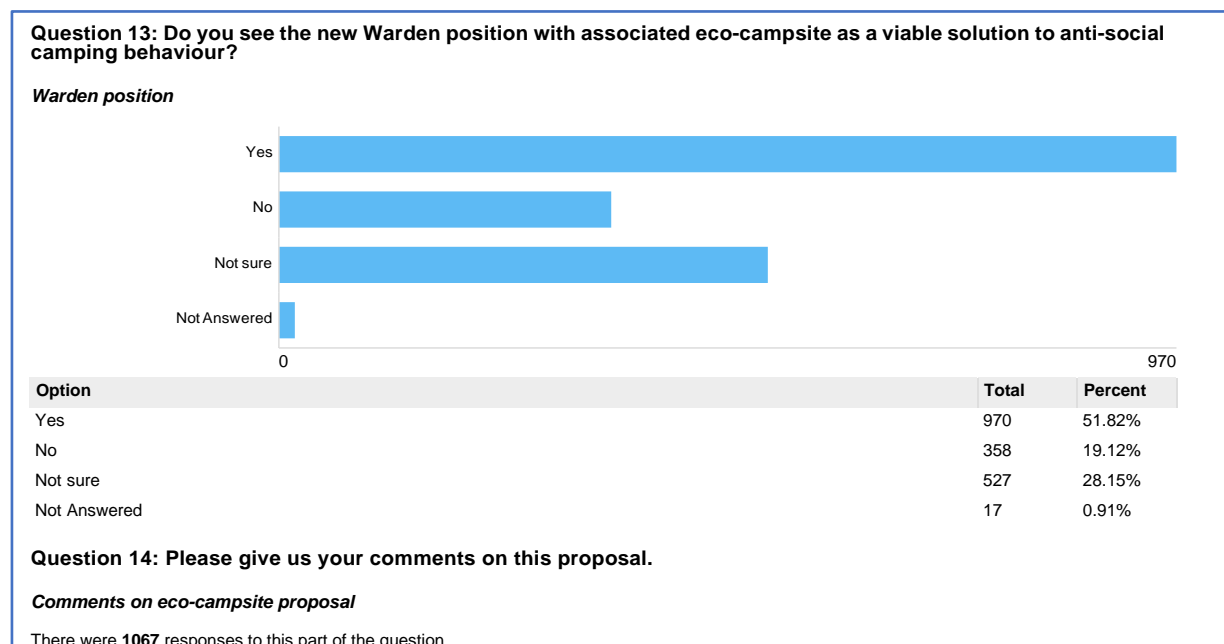
"I am a regular wild camper and never leave a trace. I've never camped at Harlaw, and one reason is because of the loud and anti-social groups which go there. A warden would actually encourage me to camp there and to take the family. I'd happily pay a small fee to allow camping to be done responsibly, in return for provision of toilet and bin facilities. I am sensitive to concerns that this could lead to erosion of rights and would expect formal legal safe-guards that this is a site specific solution in response to a specific and sustained problem of littering in a specific area and will not lead to a blanket ban on camping in the park."

"I think this must be the way forward to help encourage youngsters to access the countryside responsibly. This is even more important with the reduction in residential opportunities for school pupils in recent years."

"Have a measured approach. It is good for young people to get away from the city to camp. Many of them will be responsible and this needs to be considered. A welcoming campsite with facilities is a good idea"

Appendix 5

2020 Public Engagement on the introduction of mandatory car park charges: Question 13 & 14



The

questionnaire attempted to capture those who were resident within the Regional Park boundary. A boundary map was provided with this question.

- 203 respondents selected resident
- 1,669 respondents selected non – resident

On investigating the answers, it appears respondents have selected being resident when they are outside the boundary but living in neighbouring locations.

Using postcode data provided:

- 19 were postcodes within the Regional Park boundary
- 24 did not leave their postcode
- 160 were in neighbouring postcodes covering areas including Balerno, Currie, Bonaly and Colinton.

Using the above info **on true resident views** on a campsite and warden position

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	8	42%
No	7	37%
Not sure	4	21%
Not answered	0	0

Non-resident views on campsite and warden position

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	84	53%
No	30	19%
Not sure	43	27%
Not answered	3	1%

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

2pm, Wednesday, 20 January 2021

Report on sustainable transport and active travel to the Pentland Hills Regional Park

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	Pentland Hills
Council Commitments	

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Committee supports the measures proposed to improve sustainable access to the regional park and mitigate the impact of car parking displacement in the surrounding area. These are:
 - 1.1.1 Improving paths from local communities to the regional park
 - 1.1.2 Providing a shuttle bus service from the local communities

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Report on sustainable transport and active travel to the Pentland Hills Regional Park

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The recent health crisis has highlighted a range of growing traffic management pressures on the Pentland Hills Regional Park (PHRP), notably a significant rise in the use of car parks, causing overflow onto adjacent access roads. This report addresses this issue, proposing a series of actions that, if implemented, will help limit the impact by improving sustainable access to the regional park.

3. Background

- 3.1 According to the 2005/6 Pentland Hills Regional Park Visitor Survey, 85% of visitors to the Park arrive by private vehicle. The car parks regularly reach capacity and cars often park inconsiderately, blocking access for farm machinery, emergency vehicles or local residents. Visitor's experience is also impacted by the lack of car parking spaces available when they reach the PHRP. Providing alternative ways to visit the regional park will encourage visitors to leave their vehicles at home and help reduce these problems.
- 3.2 The regional park has always encouraged use of sustainable transport to get to the hills. A leaflet produced by the PHRP called "How to get to the Pentland Hills Regional Park by Bus" has been available since 2006, it is also downloadable from the PHRP website and a bus timetable is on display at Flotterstone. Currently, two bus routes come from Edinburgh: the No.4 to Hillend and the 101/2 to Flotterstone. A further four routes come within a ten-minute walk of the park but require lengthy walks along busy country roads with no or limited pavement provision.
- 3.3 During 1997/8 a shuttle bus service called "The Drover" was run by the PHRP service to provide a way for people without cars to get to the hills and help alleviate parking problems. It ran twice a day every Sunday between 7 December 1997 and 30 August 1998, starting at Hillend, via Dreghorn and Bonaly, along the A70 to Little Vantage, stopping at Harlaw and Threipmuir. It would then go back to Hillend and along the A702 to West Linton before returning to Hillend. For that period, it had a total of 263 passengers, an average of approximately 7 passengers a day. Passengers were charged £1 or £2 depending on how far they were travelling. The daily cost paid by the

PHRP service for the minibus and driver was initially £107.50 then £137.50 per day. The fares were kept by the Regional Park, which totalled £358.50. It is likely the service stopped due to the cost of subsidising the service.

- 3.4 There are several settlements within walking distance of the Regional Park: Balerno, Currie, Juniper Green, Bonaly, Swanston, Fairmilehead, Bilston and Penicuik. There are paths from these places to the Park and 17% of park users walk or run and 12% cycle (2020 Public Engagement results) to the Regional Park (which is a change from the 2005/6 visitor survey which recorded that only 3% walked and 8% cycled).
- 3.5 A combination of all the measures mentioned (a shuttle bus, an improved bus service and more or better paths to the Park) would not only be more sustainable, but also make the Park more accessible to those less-well-off.

4. Main report

Improving paths from local communities to the regional park

- 4.1 In June 2010, Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust completed a report on paths from Balerno to Threipmuir which presented five different options, each having benefits and disadvantages (Appendix 1). The cost varied from £80,000 to £124,000. No funding has been found for this project.
- 4.2 In 2011 a report was produced by Land Use Consultants for the regional park on “Improving Access Routes Between the Pentland Hills Regional Park and Surrounding Communities”. The report highlighted that several routes already existed around the regional park, many however needed improvements and it recommended that a number of routes were improved: Selm Muir to Little Vantage and Thieves Road; Water of Leith to Bonaly Country Park; Redford Road via Redford Wood to Bonaly; Bush to Flotterstone via Glencorse Burn; Penicuik to Carnethy via Coates and Kirk Road. The first three routes have subsequently been improved. Routes from Currie and Balerno were not suggested for improvement, as improvements were already under consideration (Appendix 2).
- 4.3 The Friends of the Pentland Hills and the Water of Leith Conservation Trust are in discussion with Rosebery Estates on how to best fund and deliver a route from Currie to Harlaw, known as the Lymphoy path.
- 4.4 Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust has recently completed The Pentland to Portobello Active Travel Feasibility Study, which aims to create a new pathway from Lothian Burn near Swanston to the coast at Portobello. The proposed route will go through Burdiehouse, Liberton, Gilmerton, the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary at Little France and Niddrie, before arriving at the sea at Joppa. The project will provide the South East of Edinburgh with a green way which will mirror the Water of Leith Walkway, providing a welcoming safe route to travel off-road to and from the countryside.
- 4.5 A funding application has been submitted to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) round 3 to improve three paths all at the edge of the Regional Park. Two of

these are presently used by visitors accessing the Park sustainably: to Bonaly Country Park and to Harlaw Visitor Centre. The outcome of the application will be known on 11th January 2021.

4.6 Bike racks have been constructed at all the major entrances to the Regional Park. This encourages people to cycle by providing a safe lockable place to leave their bike. Some visitors may feel happy about cycling to the Park but not riding in the Park, due to its rough or fragile path surfaces. Bike racks have been provided at the car parks listed below and more are planned to be put in at Harlaw and Bonaly Country Park shortly:

- Flotterstone x3
- Hillend x1
- Swanston x3
- Bonaly x1
- Harlaw x1
- Threipmuir x6

4.7 A visitor survey carried out at the three main car parks in 2018 showed the following results of how visitors travel to the Regional Park:

	Flotterstone	Threipmuir	Harlaw
Private vehicle	85%	81%	78%
Cycle	1%	2%	10%
Walk	6%	7%	10%
Horse	0%	0%	0%

4.8 Between 06/11/2020 to 04/12/2020 the Pentland Hills Regional Park held an online public engagement exercise. The engagement centred around anti-social behaviour and traffic management problems which had been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 and explored solutions around the following themes:

- creation of a warden position, eco-campsite and toilets at Harlaw Reservoir
- improvement of current parking provision at Threipmuir, Harlaw, Bonaly and Flotterstone, including minor extensions and provision of toilet facilities, and
- improvement of footpaths and active travel options for those wishing to access the regional park.

4.9 Question 5 asked “How do you generally travel to the regional park?” It received 1628 responses:

Option	Total	Percent
Private vehicle	982	52.46%
Public Transport	90	4.81%
Cycle	222	11.86%
Run or walk	316	16.88%
Horse	18	0.96%
Not Answered	244	13.03%

- 4.10 Although the impact of the recent pandemic may have influenced behaviours, it suggests that an increasing percentage of park users are choosing Active Travel as their means of access. It has certainly been noted by staff that many more people are walking and cycling to the park (e.g. up Mansfield Road, Kirkgate and Bonaly Road). Possibly some of the new visitors do not have cars or during the current pandemic people are focusing on their health and opted to make their journey to the park a part of their physical exercise.
- 4.11 Question 11 asked “Would you use a path instead of a vehicle to access the regional park if we were able to create more path links?” It received 1851 responses and indicates significant support for additional active travel infrastructure:

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	1184	63.25%
No	312	16.67%
Not sure	355	18.96%
Not Answered	21	1.12%

- 4.12 Question 12 of the 2020 Public Engagement exercise asked respondents to comment on the proposal to upgrade key access paths. 931 comments were made, which can be grouped into seven themes:

1. Roads are dangerous to walk/cycle/horse ride on (e.g. Kirkgate, Harlaw Road, Mansfield Road, A702) and could be made safer.
2. Create new off-road paths (e.g. Bonaly car park from bypass, up length of Bavelaw Burn, from Mansfield Road) and improve present off-road paths (e.g. Poet’s Glen).
3. New paths need to be suitable for all – walkers, cyclists, buggies, horses etc.
4. Advertise present walking routes to the regional park.
5. More cycle racks required.
6. Some would not walk to the regional park as it is too far (distance, health reasons, with children etc).
7. Some are against making more paths to the regional park. A variety of reasons were provided: the countryside should be left as it is; money would be better spent elsewhere (including on paths within the regional park); there are already plenty of paths to the regional park; more paths to the park would mean more erosion/anti-social behaviour; paths will not stop people coming by car or would mean car drivers would park at the start of these paths and cause problems there.

- 4.13 There is a high percentage of visitors that say they would walk to the Regional park if paths were available. Improvement or creation of paths to the places where car parking is an issue and where there is a nearby larger population should therefore be given priority.

- Penicuik to Flotterstone
- Bonaly to Bonaly Country Park

- Currie/Balerno to Harlaw
- Balerno to Threipmuir

Extending present bus services

- 4.14 Due to the narrow nature of the road and lack of turning place, the only bus route which could provide a better service to the Regional Park is the No. 4.
- 4.15 In 2019, Lothian Buses were approached regarding the extension of the No. 4 bus route to Flotterstone. For a 7 day a week operation they would require full financial backing of £450k to £510k per annum from a third party such as a local authority. A Sunday operation was something that they might consider (although it is not easy to find drivers for Sundays).
- 4.16 The current future plan is that the No. 4 bus will terminate at the new development “Destination Hillend” (retail, hotel opportunities to the Hillend Snowsports Centre). These proposals may require investment in new or improved entry paths at Hillend.
- 4.17 The Covid-19 experience at Lothian Buses has seen a core bus network maintained using government funding. They advise that they do not feel that it would be prudent, at the current time, to pursue an extension to Flotterstone/Penicuik.

Providing a shuttle bus service from the local communities

- 4.18 Question 9 of the 2020 Public Engagement exercise asked respondents “Would you use a 'Park and Ride' facility to the regional park from Hermiston, Ingliston or Straiton?” It received 1872 responses:

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	378	20.19%
No	1470	78.53%
Not Answered	24	1.28%

- 4.19 The responses to this question can be grouped into five themes:

For those supporting a Park and Ride:

- A bus service that visits all access points would help reduce pressure on car parks and allow walkers to do linear walks rather than circular routes. Current bus routes don't take walkers close enough to the regional park.
- A park and ride need to be a regular service (e.g. every 20 mins on busy days).
- If a shuttle is provided it needs to be same price as parking fee on site. Must allow dog owners to use the service.

And those against:

- Park & ride / public transport means long waits, longer journey times, waiting outside, unlikely to allow bikes, difficult for families, costs more than a car.
- There are already buses that can take you very near all walks.

- 4.20 If a shuttle bus was provided it is likely that it would probably be used by a limited number of visitors. It is unlikely that it would help reduce congestion at car parks but it would be a more sustainable way for visitors to get to the Regional Park and may make the park more accessible to a wider variety of visitors.
- 4.21 Estimated prices have been obtained for two routes (see appendix 3). “Route One” visiting Currie, Balerno, Harlaw and Threipmuir would cost £265 per day. “Route Two”, similar to the Pentland Drover (i.e. around the regional park stopping at the main car parks and the surrounding towns) would cost £345 per day. The only likely source of funding for this would be revenue from car park charges, however these car parking charges are also required in order to manage pressures within the existing operational budget for the PHRP.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 There are already some paths that link the Regional Park with surrounding communities. These should be publicised more (e.g. production and distribution of a leaflet and made available on the PHRP website). Some need to be better signposted in agreement with the landowners and some improved (e.g. Poet’s Glen).
- 5.2 It is clear that many residents of Currie and Balerno drive to Harlaw and Threipmuir car parks rather than walk/cycle/ride. The priority should be to provide routes to and from these places. Landowner approval is required, and funding will need to be secured.
- 5.3 Advice from the City of Edinburgh Council Roads team would be sought on whether the construction of a pavement for pedestrians to use along both Harlaw Road and Mansfield Road is possible. As well as making these roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists by the reducing speed limit from 60mph and some form of segregation for cyclists.
- 5.4 Various groups (Balerno Village Trust, Friends of the Pentlands, Water of Leith Trust, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust) have an interest in improving routes to the Regional Park and these groups should be encouraged to work together to increase their chances of success. The PHRP team will set up working groups to progress access improvements.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Most of the measures proposed will have financial implications – both capital and revenue. Further work is required to determine the costs of each proposed measure and how the required resources can be secured.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 An initial meeting to explore solutions was held with Ward members within the City of Edinburgh Council and stakeholder representatives on 5 August 2020.
- 7.2 PHRP Joint Committee held on 8 September 2020.
- 7.3 PHRP Consultative Forum on 27 October 2020.
- 7.4 PHRP Public Engagement Exercise from 06/11/2020 to 04/12/2020.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [“How to get to the Pentland Hills Regional Park by Bus”](#) Leaflet produced by the Pentland Hills Regional Park
- 8.2 “Improving Access Routes Between the Pentland Hills Regional Park and Surrounding Communities” produced by Land Use Consultant, 2011.
- 8.3 “Paths from Balerno to Threipmuir” by Lothian and Borders Greenspace Trust, June 2010
- 8.4 “2005-06 Pentland Hills Visitor Survey”
- 8.5 “2014 Pentland Hills Visitor Survey”
- 8.6 “2018 Pentland Hills car parks Visitor survey”
- 8.7 [“The Pentland to Portobello Active Travel Feasibility Study” by Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust](#)

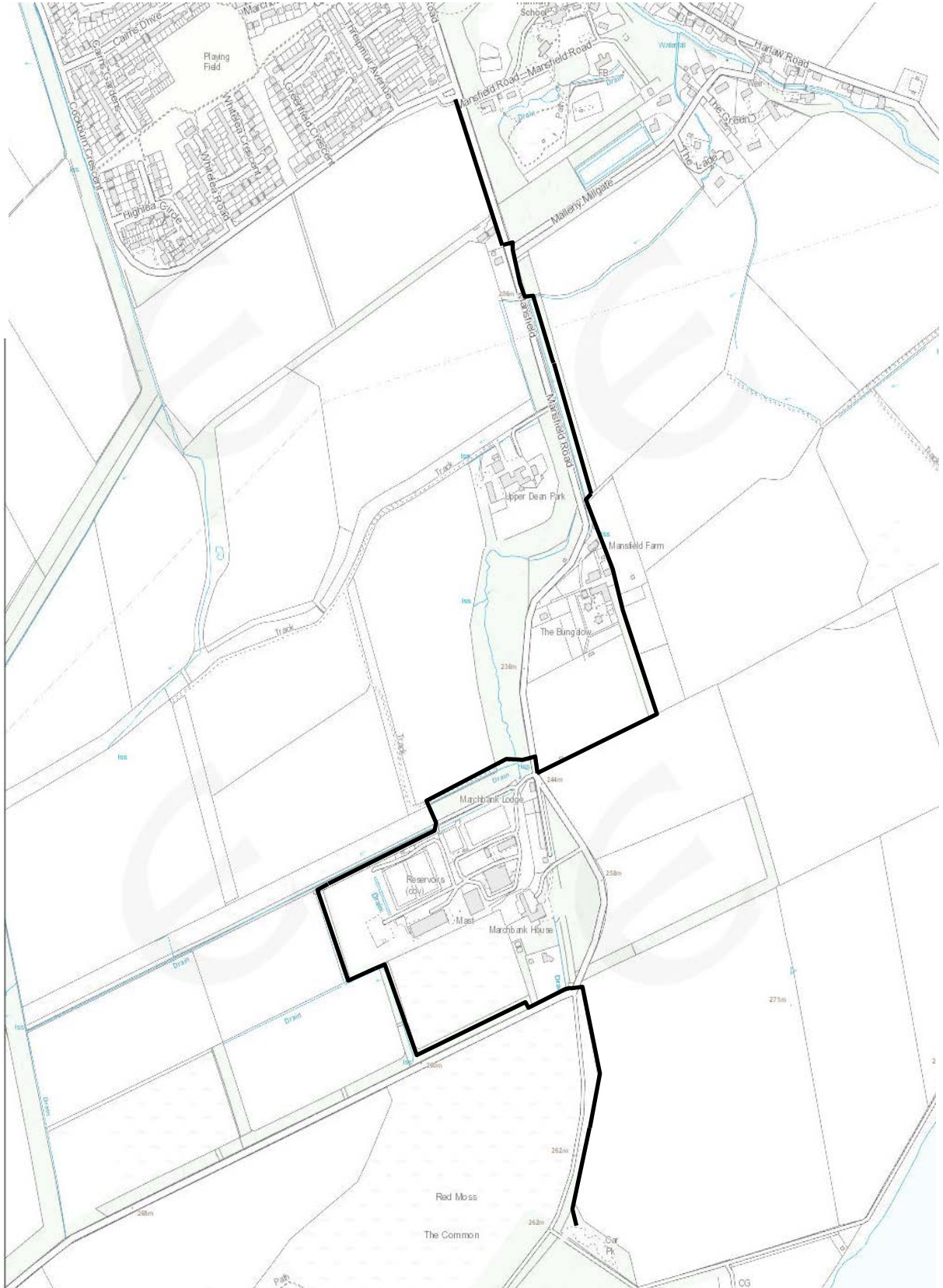
9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Five options of routes from Balerno to Threipmuir
- 9.2 Appendix 2 - Maps extract from “Improving Access Routes Between the Pentland Hills Regional Park and Surrounding Communities” produced by Land Use Consultant, 2011
- 9.3 Appendix 3 - Providing a shuttle bus service from the local communities, map of routes

Appendix 1

Five options of routes from Balerno to Threipmuir, maps

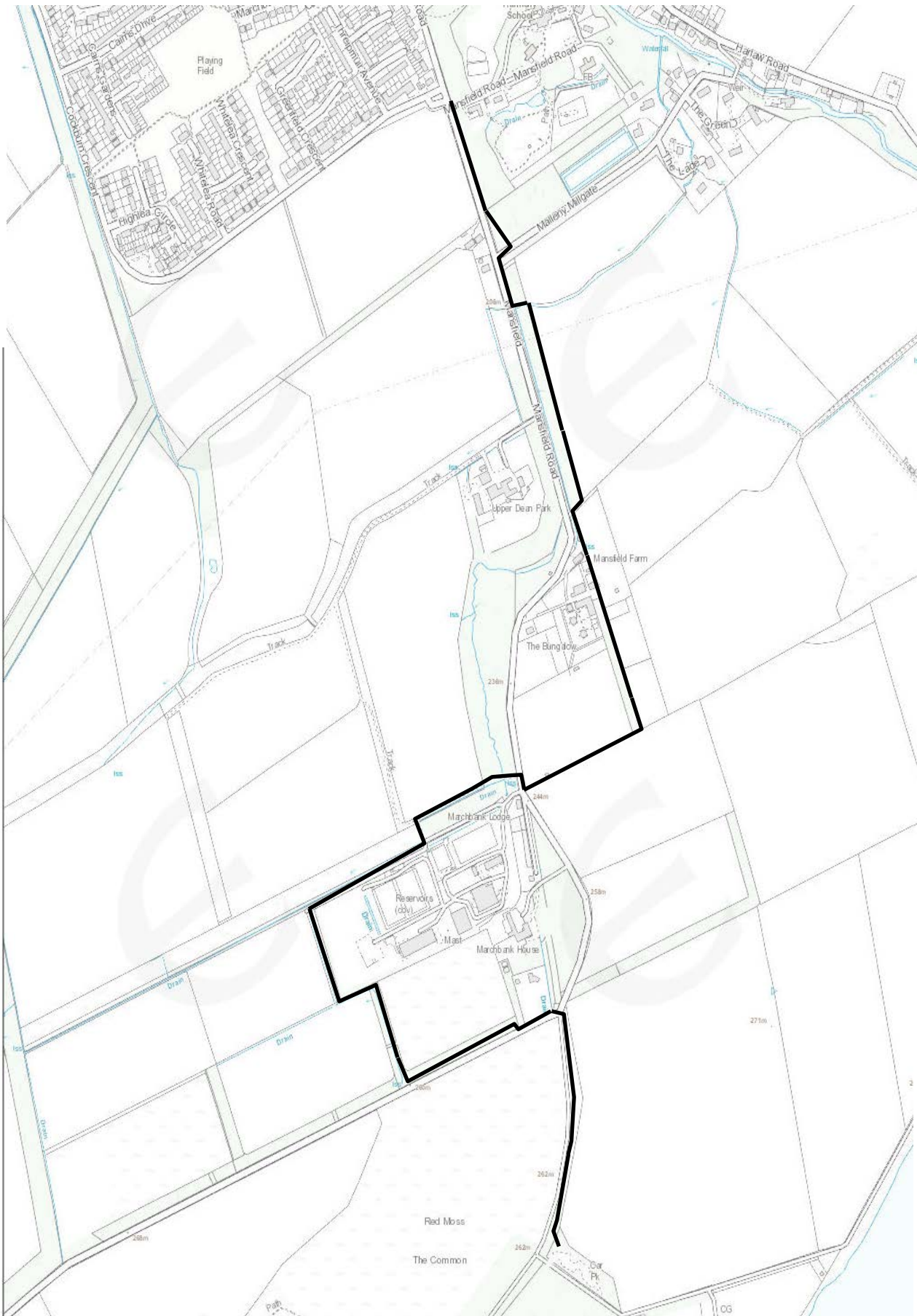
1. Safest Route



2. Shortest Route



4. Most Acceptable Route

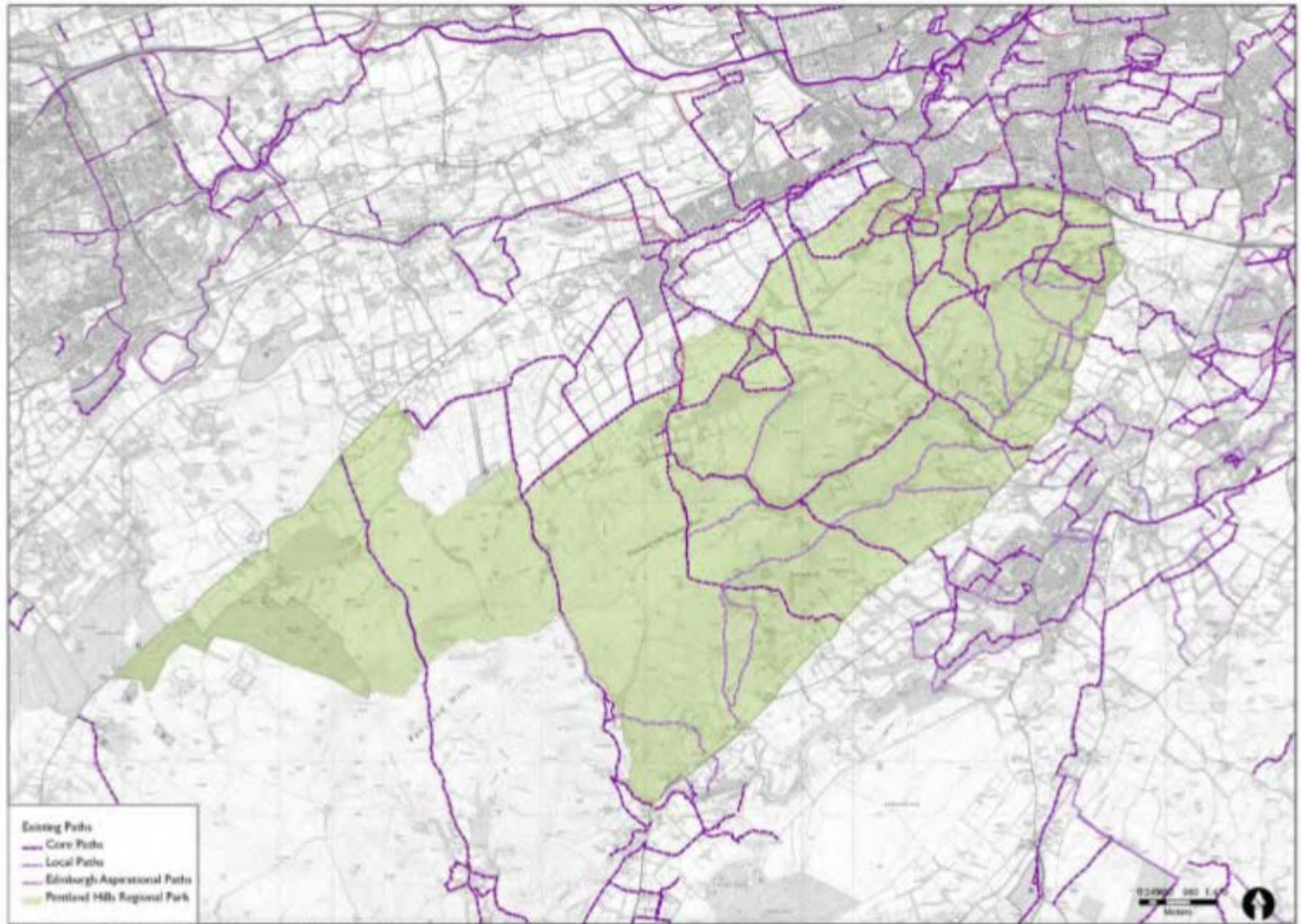


5. Key Route

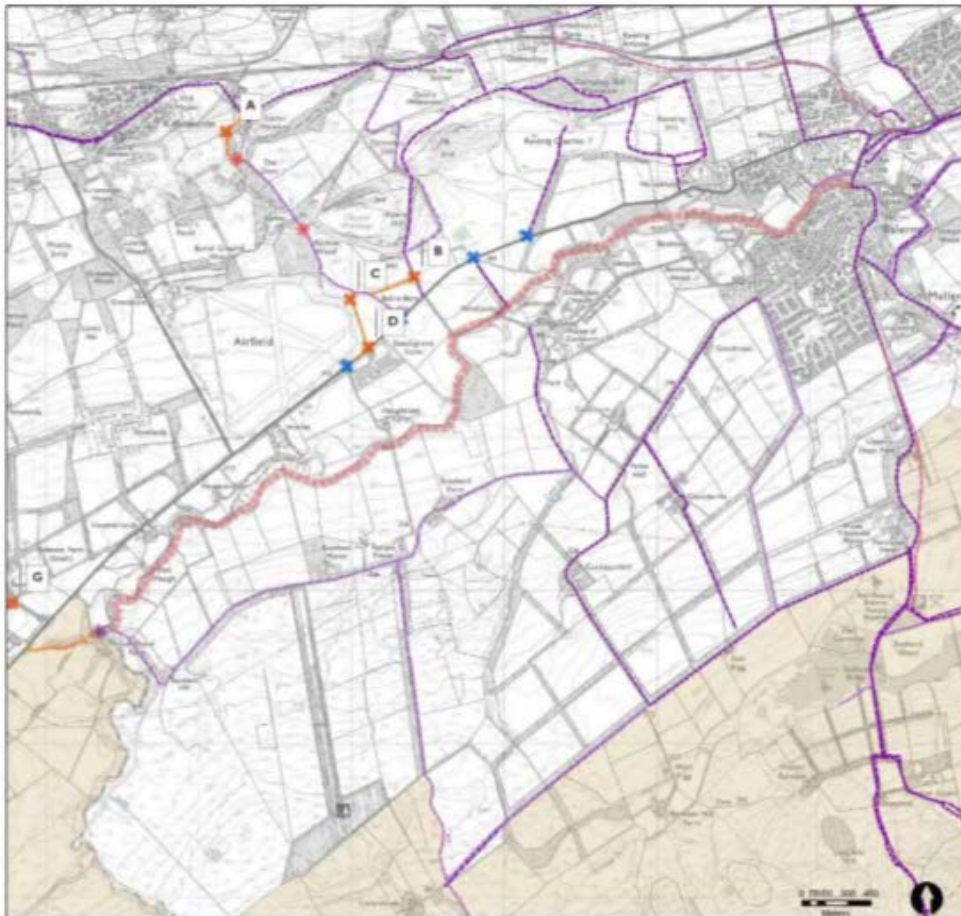


Appendix 2

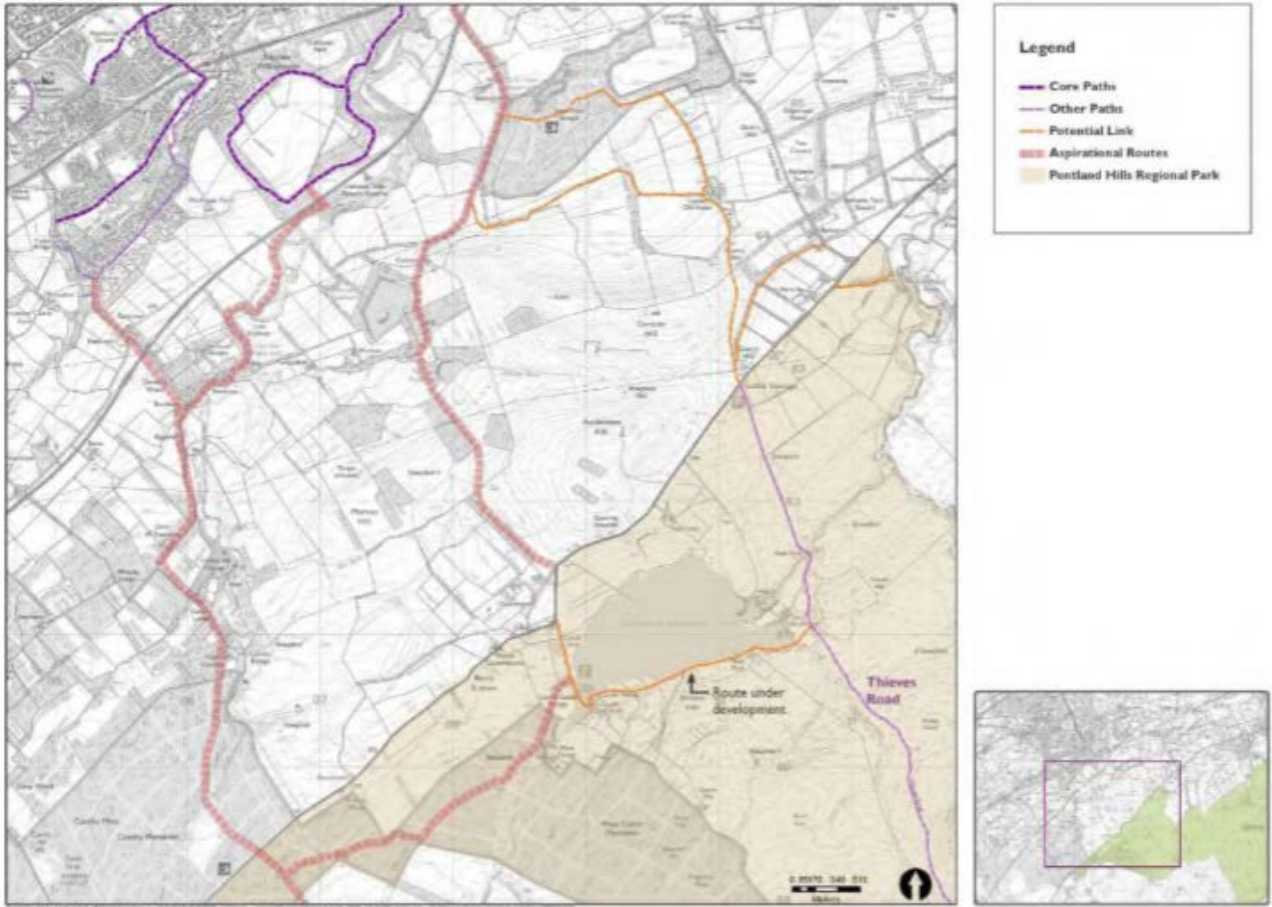
Maps extract from “Improving Access Routes Between the Pentland Hills Regional Park and Surrounding Communities” produced by Land Use Consultant, 2011



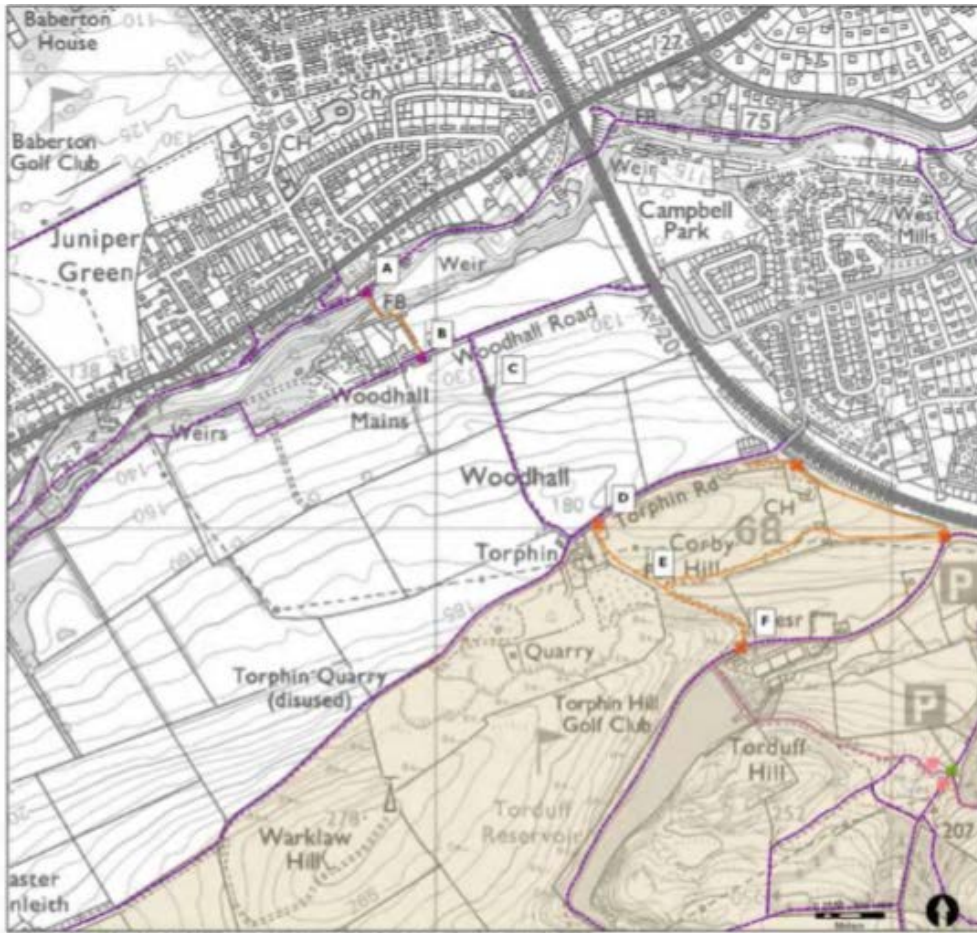
Existing path network PHRP



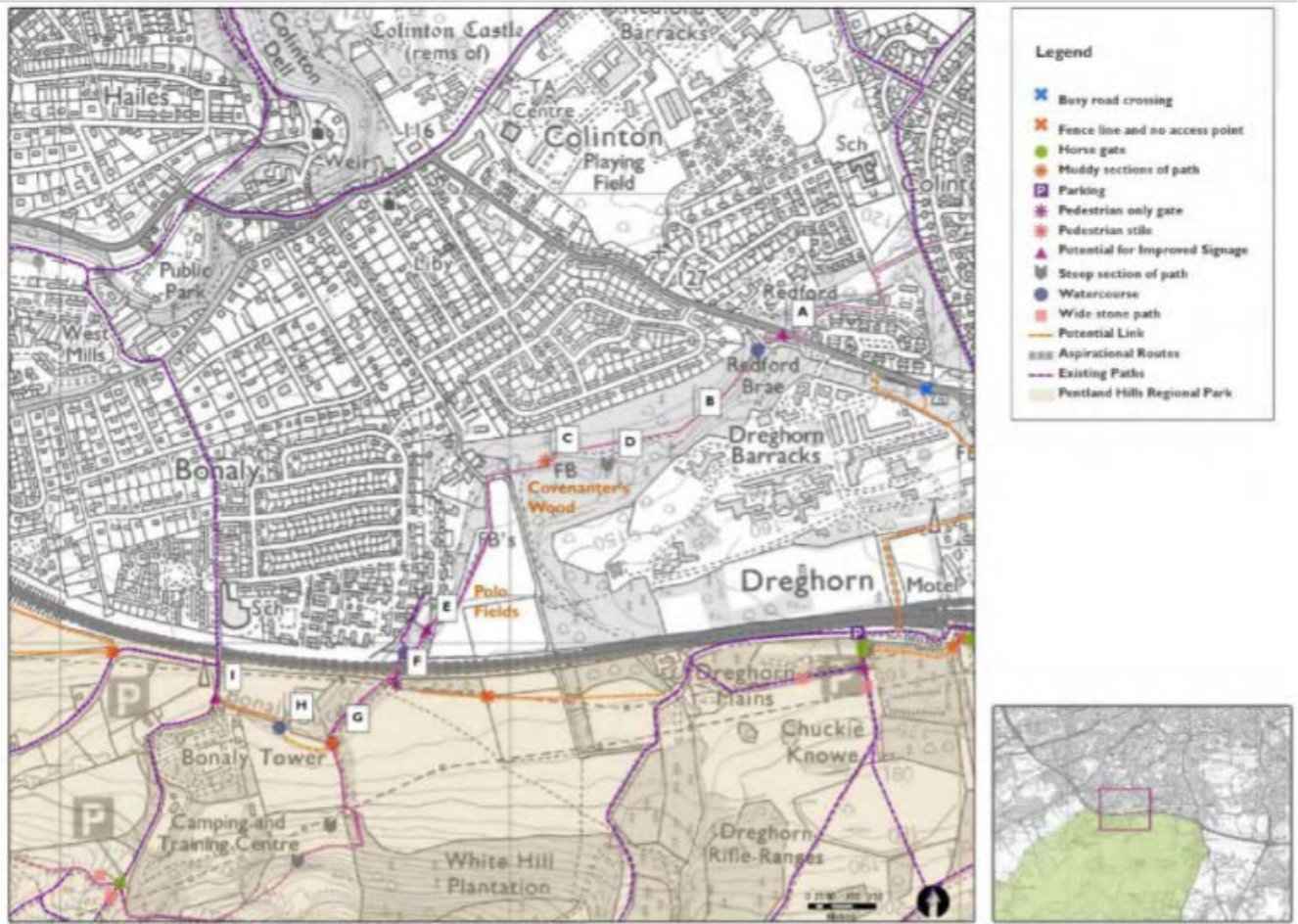
Path Selm Muir Wood – Little Vantage & Belstane - Little Vantage



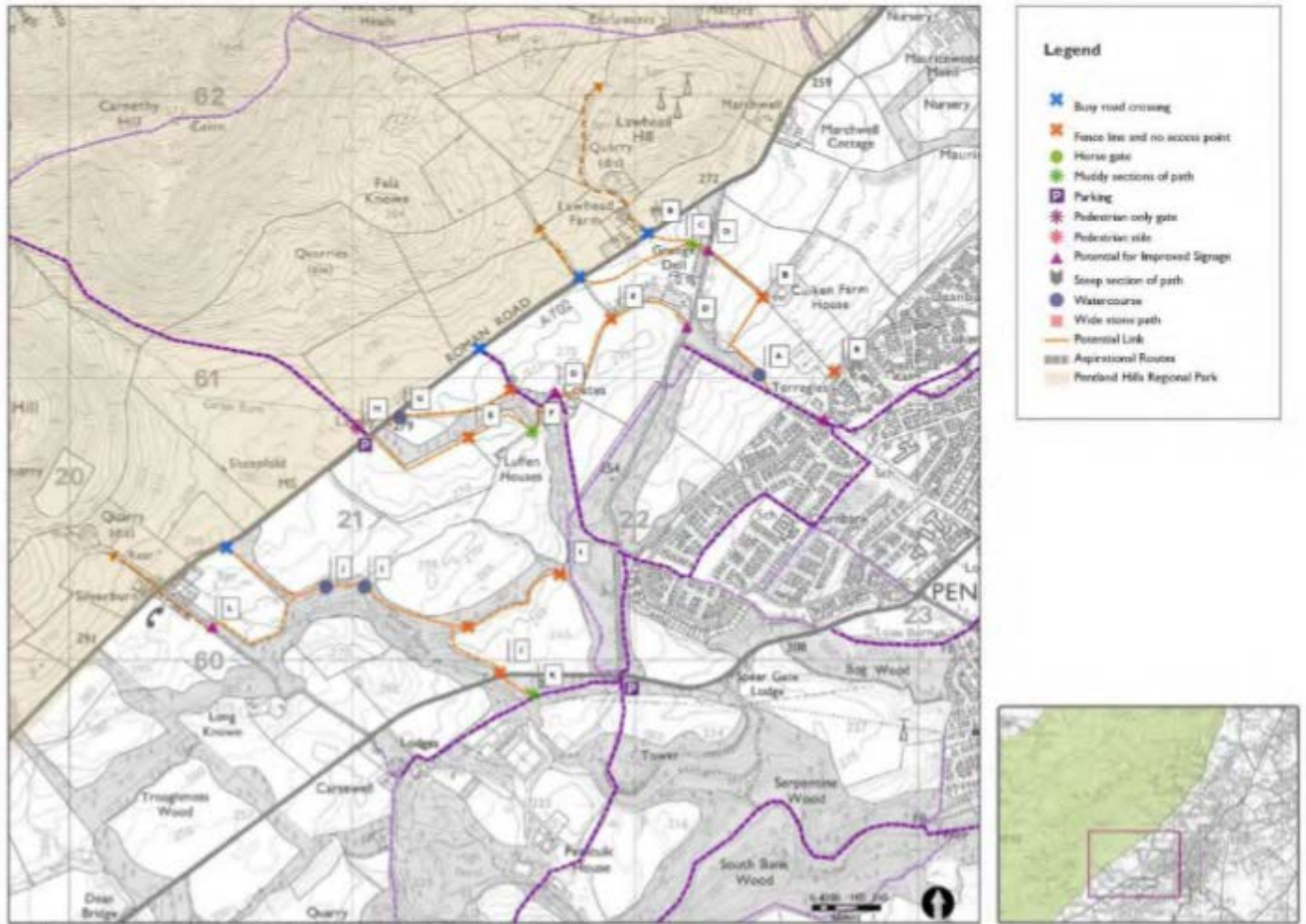
Path Linhouse and Camilty Water to the Pentlands (Thieves road)



Path from Water of Leith to Bonaly Country Park



Path from Redford Road via Covenanters Wood/Bonaly Burn and Colinton Polo Fields to Bonaly Country Park

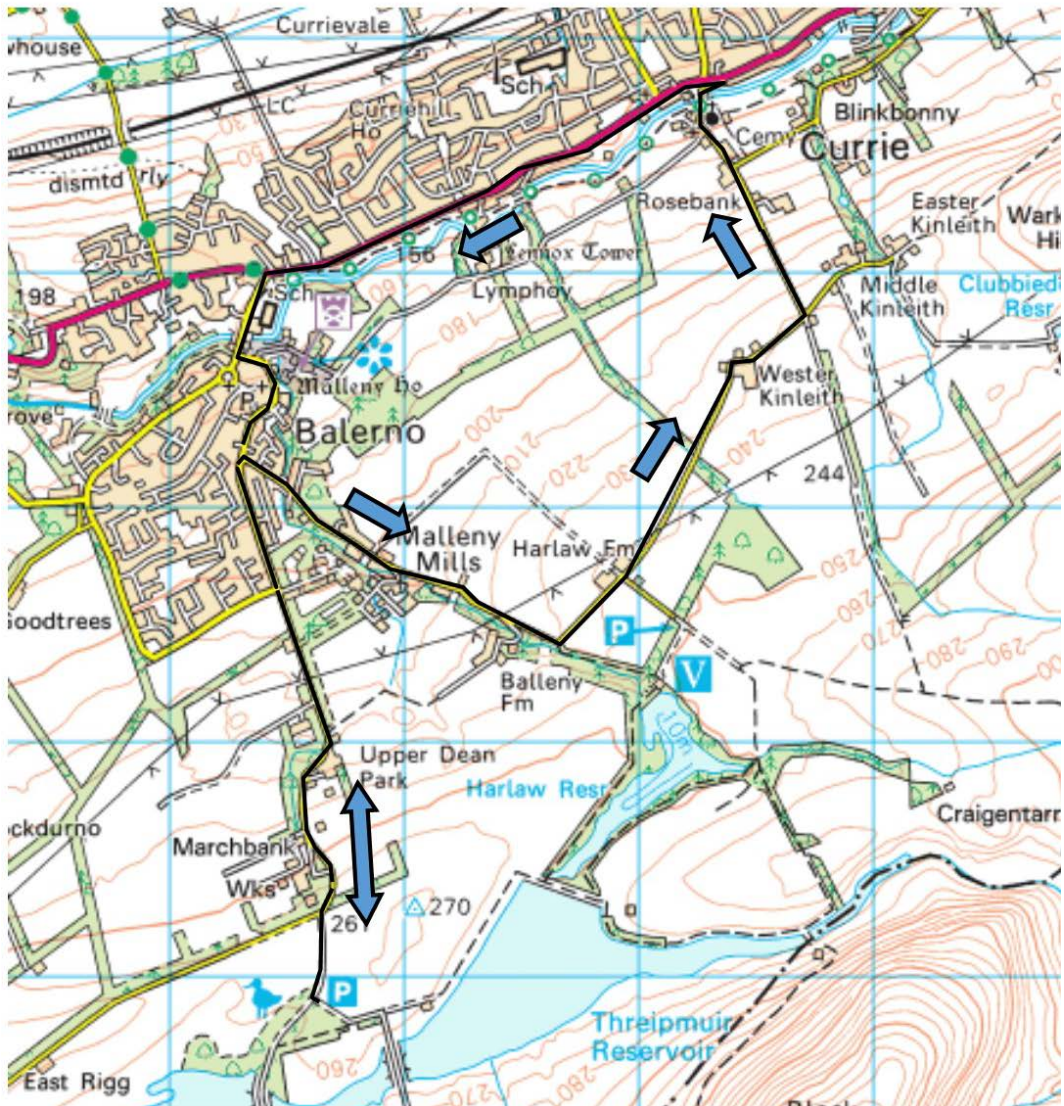


Path from Bush Estate – Fulford, and Bush Estate - Glencorse Burn - Flotterstone Bridge

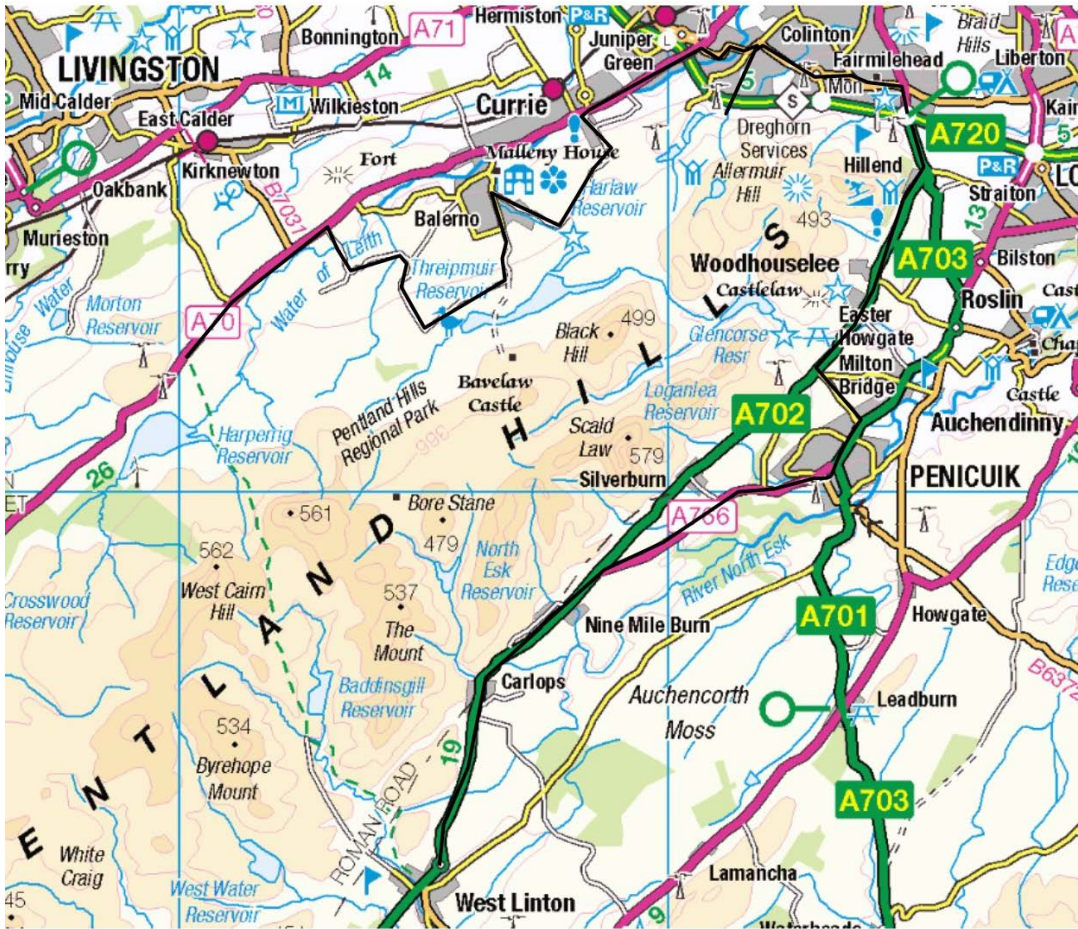
Appendix 3

Providing a shuttle bus service from the local communities, map of route one and two

Route One



Route Two



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Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

10am, Wednesday, 20 January 2021

Report on upgrading and expansion options of the principal car parks in the Pentland Hills Regional Park

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	Pentland Hills
Council Commitments	

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Committee agrees the level of investment required for the improvement and upgrade of the 4 principal car parks.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Report on upgrading and expansion options of the principal car parks in the Pentland Hills Regional Park

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The recent health crisis has highlighted a range of growing recreational and traffic management pressures on the Pentland Hills Regional Park (PHRP), notably irresponsible wild camping, anti-social behaviour, and a significant rise in the use of car parks, causing overflow onto adjacent access roads. This report addresses these issues, proposing a series of actions that if implemented will help limit their impact on the sustainable use of and access to the regional park. The specific measures proposed are: enhanced traffic and parking controls, creating additional off-road parking provision, development of active travel alternatives, creation of a formal eco-camping facility with toileting provision, enforcement of Park Management Rules and the introduction of parking charges to raise revenue to pay for these specific measures.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Pentland Hills Regional Park has been growing in popularity over the years, with significantly more visitors accessing its principal beauty spots during the current Covid-19 pandemic. The last survey conducted in 2005/06 estimated to be 600,000+ annual visitors to the Park.
- 3.2 The work of the regional park team is dedicated to providing visitor and land management services that allow people to enjoy the landscape and wildlife of the Pentland Hills without damaging its environment. Services provided by the regional park team enable people to engage with nature, take physical exercise and participate in outdoor recreational activities. Protection of the high-quality upland environment that people come to enjoy is therefore a key role for the regional park.
- 3.3 Many of the 18 car parks in the regional park (Appendix 1) were originally created to alleviate local problems which occurred when inconsiderate parking blocked farm and residential access. However, ever-increasing access to the hills by motor-vehicles means that they are regularly reaching full capacity, resulting in significant vehicle displacement at the most popular sites, which is detrimental to relationships

with adjacent farmers and land managers and is undermining the effectiveness of parking provision. See Appendix 2 for car park issues, photos and public comments.

- 3.4 Inconsiderate parking outside of the designated car parks cannot be controlled directly by the Regional Park service. Rather, the Roads Authority need to introduce and enforce appropriate measures, such as parking restrictions through yellow-lining and/or Road Traffic Regulation Orders. Police Scotland's Roads division has an input into the proposal of new Orders by local authorities but does not decide or enforce them. They however can intervene when dangerous parking or road obstruction takes place on roads.
- 3.5 Expansion of principle car parks would be done with the aim to alleviate site specific problems associated with displacement parking
- 3.6 Visitor surveys (1998, 2006, 2018) consistently show that up to 85% of visitors travel by car to the regional park and the pressure on the limited parking resource has increased year on year with more calls for improvements by visitors and nearby residents who are impacted by displacement parking. An online Public Engagement exercise held in Nov-Dec 2020 showed a change in trend with 52% of visitors reporting they travel by car to PHRP. There was a welcome increase in those selecting other methods of transport as their preferred method e.g. walk, cycle. This is in line with the increase witnessed by the PHRP team as a result of Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.7 **Flotterstone car park** is our largest facility. Displacement leads to parking on the A702 trunk road and double parking at the entrance to Flotterstone meaning that residents and agricultural users can become trapped in / out of the area. There is also a small café in the old visitor centre building at the car park which has become very popular and attracts more people to visit this site. There is also the entrance to the Glen road which is for residents/ farmers and fisheries clients/managers only and is regularly being accessed by visitors looking for a car parking space closer to their destination.
- 3.8 **Bonaly Country Park** has a small car park that sits at the end of a dead-end road and reaches capacity frequently. This car park has no space delineation and no blue badge provision. There is an overflow parking area that is unsurfaced and regularly becomes unfit for use due to the muddy conditions. Displacement parking occurs in the passing places on the access road and puts pressure on a Scout Camp and Alpaca business that are located on the same road.
- 3.9 **Harlaw car park** is small and reaches capacity most days, parking bays are not effectively delineated leading to the available space not being utilised to its full potential. A car counter installed in July 2020 counted 27,133 cars in a 57-day period up to 3rd September (an average of 476 vehicles/ day) highlighting how popular this site is for vehicle access. (Appendix 3). This shows demand far outweighs availability. Displacement parking occurs along the access track to the car park where at times access can be blocked for farm machinery due to inappropriate parking. Displacement leads to parking on the narrow country road leading to the car park, causing disruption to agricultural vehicle access and putting pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders at risk from traffic in the road.

- 3.10 **Threipmuir car park** reaches capacity most weekends and over the last year PHRP Officers have reported that it happens frequently during the week. Once full, cars often park on the narrow road leading to the car park causing access problems for residents who are concerned that Emergency Vehicles would be delayed or not be able to reach their properties. Displacement parking also causes disruption to agricultural vehicle access and puts pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders at risk from traffic in the road. Like Harlaw, some space in the car park is wasted due to poor delineation of parking spaces.

4. Main report

Upgrade/expansion of principal car parks

- 4.1 Given that existing formal parking provision is regularly exceeded, the Pentland team identified the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) as an opportunity to source funding for improvements to parking layout and capacity. Improvements include surfacing, space marking, vehicle manoeuvrability, capacity and signage; and the addition of extra disabled parking provision and bicycle rails. (Appendix 4)
- 4.2 **Harlaw** – a reoccurring issue at Harlaw is poor parking on the access track leads to the blocking of access for large farm machinery (and potentially emergency vehicles). When vehicles fill the side of the access track there is no segregated area for pedestrians/cyclists/horses to use the track therefore putting them in conflict with vehicles. Through improvement of bay marking in the existing car park and an expansion into the woodland, space could be created enabling the access track to be segregated for use as a path and access track only. The spaces removed from the access track would be provided within the new expansion area. This does not create additional parking provision for the area. (Appendix 5)
- 4.3 **Threipmuir** – this car park suffers from limited vehicle manoeuvrability as there is no one-way through system or sufficient turning area. The car park area could be expanded creating additional parking spaces and improve one-way and turning ability. (Appendix 5)
- 4.4 **Bonaly** – the proposals are to restructure the current car park to incorporate the newly acquired land, installation of blue badge spaces and improved signage. Four new bicycle racks are scheduled for installation in 2021 as part of the Active Travel programme.
- 4.5 **Flotterstone** – unbound surface and bay marking has been damaged over the year and repairs are required to improve the surface and delineate parking bays. Some expansion through removal of trees within the existing parking area could allow for creation of additional parking spaces. (Appendix 5)
- 4.6 Between 06/11/2020 to 04/12/2020 the Pentland Hills Regional Park held an online public engagement exercise. The engagement centred around the anti-social behaviour and traffic management problems exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Questions 5, 7, 8 and 10 gathered information on how visitors travelled

to the regional park, their car parking experience at the principal car parks and their views on the proposals to upgrade/expand.

- 4.7 It has been possible to extrapolate data from respondents claiming to live in the regional park. Of these 203 respondents, only 19 provided a postcode which confirms that they live within the PHRP (Appendix 7). The remainder live close to the regional park in areas such as Balerno, Currie or Bonaly.
- 4.8 Question 5 asked “How do you generally travel to the regional park?” and received 1,872 responses.

Option	Total	Percent
Private vehicle	982	52.46%
Public Transport	90	4.81%
Cycle	222	11.86%
Run or walk	316	16.88%
Horse	18	0.96%
Not Answered	244	13.03%

- 4.9 Previous visitor surveys in 1998 and 2005/6 had the following results regarding mode of transport to the regional park. 843 questionnaires were completed in 2005/6.

Option	1998	2005/6
Private vehicle	84%	85%
Public Transport	3%	3%
Cycle	5%	3%
Run or walk	8%	8%
Horse	0%	0%

- 4.10 Question 7 asked “Have you experienced any issues with parking provision at any of the four principal car parks in the regional park?” There were 1,872 responses.

4.10.1 Parking provision – Harlaw

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	952	50.85%
No	521	27.83%
Don't know	267	14.26%
Not Answered	132	7.05%

4.10.2 Threipmuir

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	749	40.01%
No	631	33.71%
Don't know	329	17.57%
Not Answered	163	8.71%

4.10.3 Bonaly

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	516	27.56%

No	640	34.19%
Don't know	480	25.64%
Not Answered	236	12.61%

4.10.4 Flotterstone

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	862	46.05%
No	532	28.42%
Don't know	307	16.40%
Not Answered	171	9.13%

- 4.11 Question 8 asked “Do you agree or disagree that the proposals will improve parking at the four principal car parks in the regional park?”. There were 1,872 responses.

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	383	20.46%
Agree	874	46.69%
Neither agree nor disagree	266	14.21%
Disagree	203	10.84%
Strongly disagree	132	7.05%
Not Answered	14	0.75%

- 4.12 The Public Engagement invited comments on this proposal (Question 10) and received 1,067 responses which can be grouped into eight themes as below:

- Increase car park size will encourage more vehicles
- Not a sustainable option. A more sustainable method would be preferred
- Access roads can't cope with traffic
- Welcomed improvement necessary to alleviate displacement
- Important there are traffic restrictions (e.g. double yellow lines) and these are upheld as there is still likely to be bad parking.
- The suggested increase in parking spaces will not be enough and need to be greater
- Do not remove trees
- Space required for horse boxes

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 If RTIF is awarded, carry-out car park improvement plans as proposed in the grant application with some adjustment following the Public Engagement and subject to planning consent.
- 5.2 If no RTIF funding awarded, a priority exercise must be agreed to maximise the impact of any upgrade using CEC Capital Investment programme in place.

5.3 Search for other source of funding.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 RTIF application Project costs and funding for all 4 car parks can be seen in Appendix 8. Estimated total cost is **£426,170** which includes £9,850 of VAT and £28,000 of in-kind elements. The RTIF fund would potentially contribute 70% of the total cost leaving CEC to contribute £90k spread over 2 years.
- 6.2 If no RTIF awarded, the estimated cost for each car park upgrade and expansion are as follows (Appendix 8):
- Bonaly £253k
 - Harlaw £68k
 - Threipmuir £38k
 - Flotterstone £32k
- 6.3 One of the suggestions to lower the overall cost for **Bonaly** car park would be to explore for the section of Bonaly Road between the upper and lower car park to be pushed forward for the “People for places” programme. During the March lockdown where all the car parks were closed, there has been an increased in people cycling, walking, jogging and horse riding to the PHRP. This section of the road is narrow, single track with some sharp bends leading car drivers to a dead-end type of car park with little manoeuvrability. Making this road more pedestrianised would improve the safety of visitors using this access point to the hills. Some thoughts should be made to not impact the Scout Centre and Alpaca business. The upper car park could be repurposed with a smaller investment (**maximum £10k**). This option would remove any potential income generation from the small upper car park in the future. Focus could be shifted to improving the lower car park area with some expansion, bay delineation and signage (maximum £8k).
- 6.4 **Harlaw** expansion is subject to planning permission and public opinion in general is against the removal of trees. A short-term investment would be to line the parking bays properly to maximise parking. The access track requires resurfacing. A segregated path along the access track would be required to improve the safety of visitors walking/ cycling/ horse riding along it but without provision of additional car parking space within the car park the parking is unlikely to be removed from the access track to provide this (**Estimated £30k**).
- 6.5 **Threipmuir** could benefit the most from the improvement/upgrade and investment. Subject to the outcome from the Certificate of lawfulness application to CEC Planning, there would be 34 new parking spaces and the creation of 4 blue badge holder parking bays. New lining of the parking bays would also maximise parking in this popular car park. Double yellow lining is already in place outside the car park (for a short distance only) to discourage car parking displacement (**Recommend investing £38k**).

- 6.6 **Flotterstone** would however benefit mostly from the demarcation of the parking bays and the installation of a vehicle barrier at the start of the Glen road (if approved by all landowners/residents/fisheries managers). At present the access road from the A702 opposite the Flotterstone Inn to the car park is coned off to provide safe access and help with agricultural/emergency vehicle access. Formalising this with a designated path would be recommended along with signage and double yellow lines to prevent parking in non-designated areas (**Estimated £20k**).
- 6.7 The upgrade of these car parks would be assisting with the future introduction of parking charges once the Traffic Regulation Order has been successful. This statutory legal process under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 could take between nine to twelve months and may take longer.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 An initial meeting to explore solutions was held with Ward members and stakeholder representatives on 5 August 2020.
- 7.2 PHRP JC held on 08 September 2020.
- 7.3 PHRP Consultative Forum on 27 October 2020.
- 7.4 PHRP Engagement Exercise 06/11/2020 to 04/12/2020.
- 7.5 Planning applications/Certificates of Lawfulness.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 "2005-06 Pentland Hills Visitor Survey"
- 8.2 "2014 Pentland Hills Visitor Survey"
- 8.3 "2018 Pentland Hills car parks Visitor survey"

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 - Parking areas in the Pentland Hills Regional Park, table and map
- 9.2 Appendix 2 - Car park issues, photos and public comments
- 9.3 Appendix 3 - Car counter data results 2020
- 9.4 Appendix 4 - Proposed car park plans in RTIF application
- 9.5 Appendix 5 - Car park designs
- 9.6 Appendix 6 - Planning applications and certificate of lawfulness information
- 9.7 Appendix 7 - 2020 Public Engagement on the upgrade/expansion of the principal car parks: Question 5, 7, 8 and 10

9.8 Appendix 8 - Cost for the proposed upgrade/expansion of the 4 car parks in the RTIF bid

Appendix 1

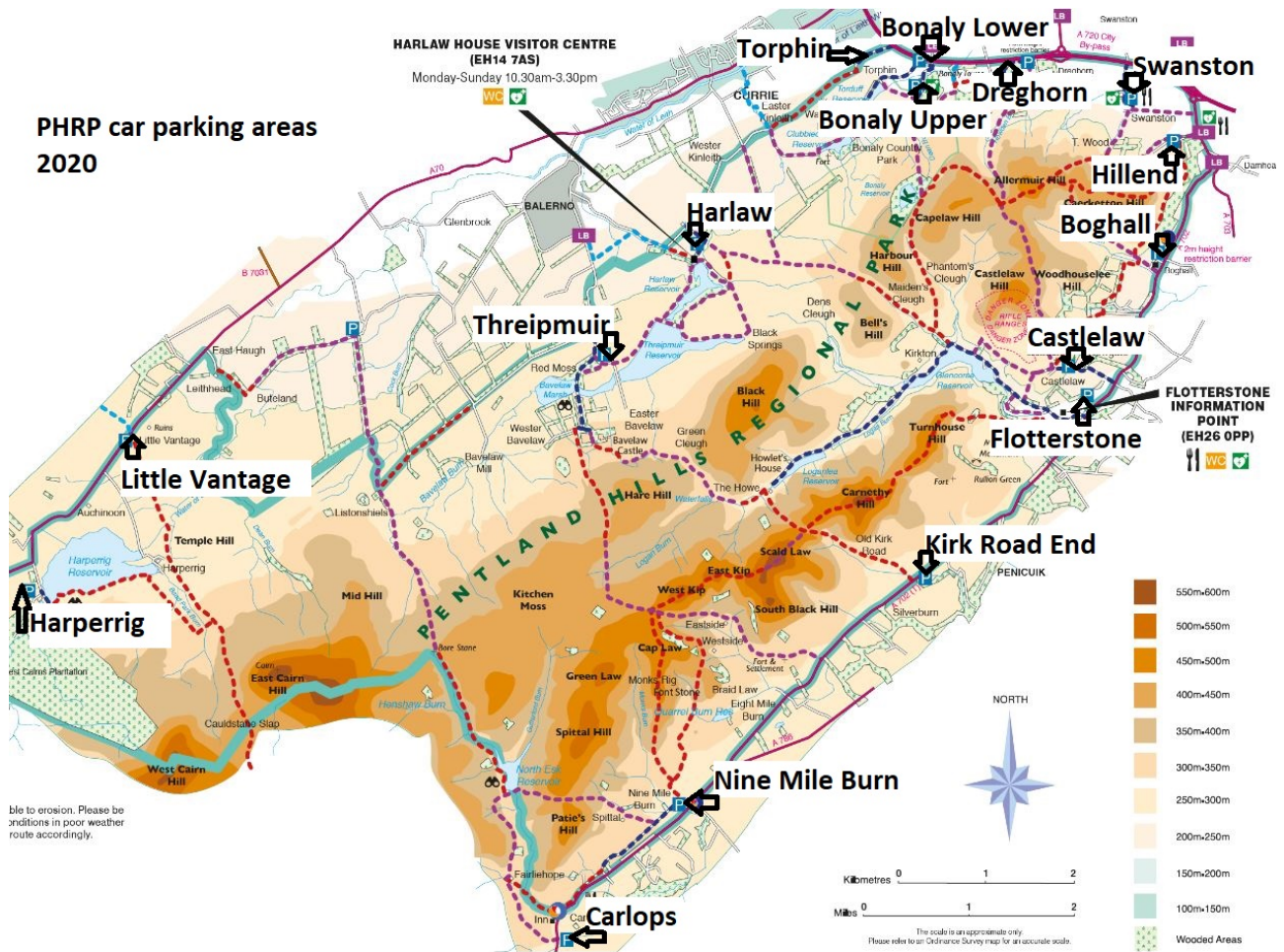
Parking areas in the Pentland Hills Regional Park, table and map.

Entrances to the Regional Park where parking is possible	Spaces	Blue badge spaces	description	LA area	Owner / responsibility	Notes
Carlops	14		Car park	Scottish Borders Council (SBC)	SBC	Informal. Not in PHRP
Nine Mile Burn EH26 9LZ	10	0	Car park	Midlothian Council (MLC)	MLC	Some spaces used by residents
Kirk Road End	8	0	Lay-by	MLC	Bear Scotland	
Flotterstone Visitor Information Point & café EH26 0PP	68	3	Car park	MLC	MLC	Donation box in place
Castlelaw	6	0	Car park	MLC	Ministry of Defence (MoD) or/Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)	Informal parking area
Boghall EH10 7DX	20	0	Car park	MLC	SRUC	Due to be reduced in size
Hillend Upper EH10 7DU	24	0	Car park	MLC	MLC	Probably due to be redeveloped by Midlothian
Hillend Lower EH10 7DU	12	0	Car park	MLC	MLC	Probably due to be redeveloped by Midlothian
Swanston EH10 7DS	30	0	Car park	The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC)	CEC	Donation box in place
Dreghorn, car park	20	0	Parking on access road	CEC	MoD	No access for some time due to works

Laverockdale EH13 0QX	N/A	N/A	Street parking	CEC	CEC	Residential area
Bonaly Country Park Upper EH13 0PB	25	0	Car park	CEC	CEC	Donation box in place. Half car park grassed and requiring upgrade
Bonaly Country Park Lower (Torphin Rd) EH13 0PB	30	0	Street parking	CEC	CEC	Not used by residents - entirety available for PHRP parking
Torphin Quarry, street parking, free, EH13 0PQ	N/A	N/A	Street parking	CEC	CEC	Used by residents at top of road
Harlaw Visitor Information Point / Reservoir EH14 7AS	31 +20 on access track	3	Car park	CEC	CEC (access track owned by Rosebery Estates)	Donation box in place
Threipmuir Reservoir EH14 7JS	50	3	Car park	CEC	CEC	Donation box in place (broken)
Little Vantage	6	0	Car park	WLC	WLC	
Harperrig Reservoir EH27 8DH	12	0	Car park	WLC	Owned privately but CEC/WLC responsibility	

From the table above, the principal car parks can be identified as Flotterstone, Threipmuir, Harlaw and Bonaly (Upper and Lower).

**PHRP car parking areas
2020**



ble to erosion. Please be
conditions in poor weather
route accordingly.

Appendix 2

Car park issues, photos and public comments



Figure 1 A702 at Flotterstone, cars parked on verge of 60mph trunk road



Figure 2 A702 at Flotterstone, cars parked on footpath towards Penicuik forcing pedestrians into oncoming 60mph traffic



Figure 3 Displacement parking on access road to Flotterstone car park, narrows access from A702 and can prevent access for emergency and agricultural vehicles



Figure 4 Mansfield road at Threipmuir car park, cars parked on verge narrowing the country road and impacting emergency/agricultural vehicle access



Figure 5 -6 irresponsible parking on access track to Harlaw reservoir car park. Blocking access to emergency and agricultural vehicles



Current state of car parks

a. Harlaw car park



Figure 1 Surface and drain cleaning, edging and full bay lining required



Figure 2 Damaged edging replacements and full bay lining required

b. Flotterstone



Figure 3-4 damaged space markers and insufficient tarring in car park



c. Threipmuir



Figure 3 Additional work on drainage and bay delineation required



Figure 4 Parking bay lining required to optimise available space

d. Bonaly



Figure 5 No parking bay delineation or appropriate turning area



Figure 6 Overflow area acquired in 2019, unusable in wet conditions due to unbound surface

Public comments

Email:

Sent: 09 September 2020 13:55

Subject: Parking.

Parking back to chaos at Threipmuir last weekend. No parking on access road to car park but 4 cars in front of the farmers gate on the left. Cars everywhere in the car park one double parked across 2 other cars presumably all came together but leaving very little space to get in or out of the car park. Van blocking entire area as he couldn't find enough space to turn to get out. Parking along the Rigg Road on the verges and in the lay byes for passing.

Sent: 22 August 2020 20:25

Subject: Car parking at Harlaw and Threipmure today.

It was very sad that everyone who wished to enjoy the above today could not as parking is so limited. Worst still was the complete and utter jam at Harlaw car park where people had actually parked up and blocked the way out so vehicles had to reverse out of the way in upon discovering no space! I am a local and found the whole outing frustrating.....I won't tell you what the dog had to say about it! It is not printable!

Hope maybe you can put signs up to stop inconsiderate parking . I obeyed the rules and did not park on the verge but others clearly can't read.

Sent: 19 July 2020 12:49

Subject: Balerno Community Council - Harlaw and Threipmuir reservoirs - parking and camping problems etc.

"On the parking side the car parks are filled up very early each morning and some vehicles may be parked overnight. Access to the Harlaw Farm fields on the south side of Harlaw Road via the road to the car park appears now to be obstructed and at the very least very difficult for farm machinery.'

Social media:

Posted to 'Pentland Hills Regional Park' Facebook page:

"Went up to Flotterstone on Sunday took one look at it and turned back. Cars abandoned everywhere on the access roads and blocking other cars in round the car park. Parked on the verges of the A702 and on the corner of the junction for the car park. Huge crowds of people, no social distancing. Very sad to see."

"Same situation at Threipmuir: car park full at the weekend and cars parked on grass verges up to 1 km away on Mansfield road & the Rigg road, despite signs in the village saying 'no parking on road verges beyond this point'"

Posted to "Balerno Cares' Facebook page:

“Maybe paying to park and no parking overnight might help. I would be more than happy to pay £2 to park as long as the money is used to maintain the Pentlands. A permit to camp at the reservoirs, doesn't need to cost anything, would help stop huge numbers from taking over, limit the number of permits for each day. Only suggestions.”

“Pantomime time at 2.30pm today at Harlaw Reservoir car park. No waiting signs ignored, every inch of parking space and spaces not designated for cars used and people, dogs and bikes everywhere. Social distancing difficult. Victim of its success really. I drove away.”

“I think that's why a safe route into the Pentlands from Balerno really is key, so those who can walk up are able to do so. There's also no need for able-bodied cyclists to park at Harlaw for example, if they can spin up the road in ten minutes from Balerno.”

“ Rigg Road blocked at threipmuir end due in part to bad parking. Avoid and pass on.”

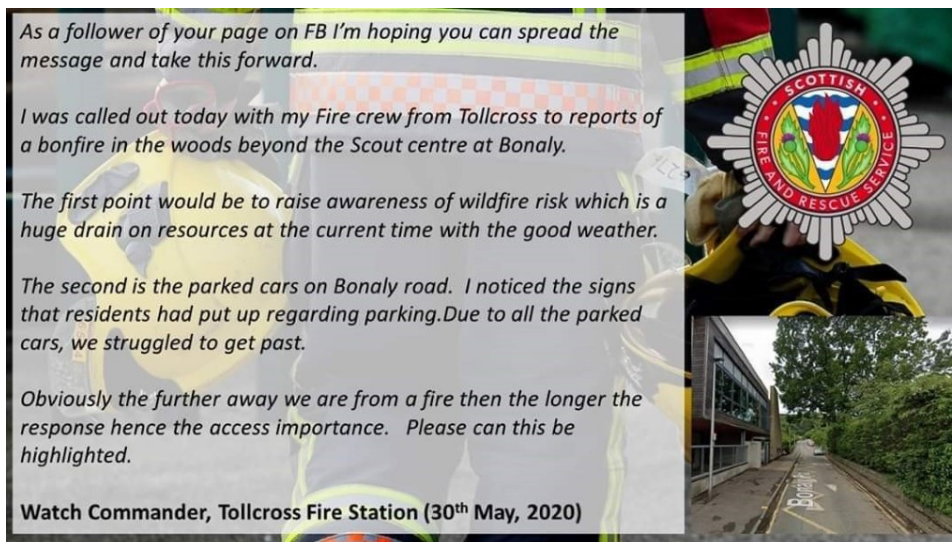
Posted to 'Pentland Hills Users' Facebook page:

“Question re the car parks up at Threipmuir and Harlaw – wha time do they generally fill up from on Saturday and Sunday? Thanks in advance.”

- I found harlaw emptier than threipmuir. I walk through them about 7-8 & they have spaces then. When I'm back through at 11 they're full
- I went to both last weekend and they were almost done full by 930
- I run past regularly on a Sunday. On a nice day they are full by 9am.
- I agree with the others. Around 6.30/7am they're pretty quiet but after 9.30 they are usually full.
- Thanks everyone, that's what I thought.
- This was a sunny Sunday at 0700 pretty much full already
- I was at Harlaw yesterday. Despite being a weekday and rubbish weather there were only about 4-5 places left at 9 am. I mean in the carpark, access road was still empty but I do not park there
- We were at Thripmuir last Sunday 8am - got parked easy as it was half full but busy with cars arriving
- Do you think arriving early afternoon is totally stupid? Or will people be leaving by then?
 - You won't be guaranteed a place but it's not a stupid idea. Most folk go in the morning so you'll have a decent chance.
- Harlaw was full on a Sunday at 8am...

“I personally think they should barrier these car parks and make it mandatory to pay a pound or two. I was at Flotterstone early doors yesterday and was lucky to get a space. By the time I returned, I have honestly never seen carnage like it in regards parking. Folk parking all over the place not caring whether others could get out the proper spaces or not. Roll on winter I say !! ”

- second this! Someone blocked me in a space on Saturday when I went a run from flotterstone! Literally only managed to reverse out the space with my van with mm's to spare and a 50 point turn people are so selfish !



Comments made during 2018 visitor surveys:

“parking is difficult”

“updates on when the car park is full”

“extend car park” (mentioned multiple times)

“always going to use the car park, dogs and small children”

“highlight spaces in the car park better”

“compulsory car park payments”

“annual payment facility for frequent users”

‘small kids and a dog, need to use car park’

“need car for the kids”

Appendix 3

Car counter data results 2020

Electronic data counters installed in 2020

HARLAW	CARS	PEOPLE – individual counts
7 th July – 13 th August (36 days)	14085	1730
13 th August – 3 rd September (21 days)	13048	1677
3 rd September – 8 th December (96 days)	29891	
BONALY		
6 th March – 7 th July (135 days)	Car data was corrupted so didn't record	33000
7 th July – 9 th July (3 days – battery died, batt replaced 3 rd Sept)	This car counter was moved to Harlaw as it reopened before Bonaly upper car park	5161

Appendix 4

Proposed car park plans as applied for in RTIF application

See map in Appendix 1.

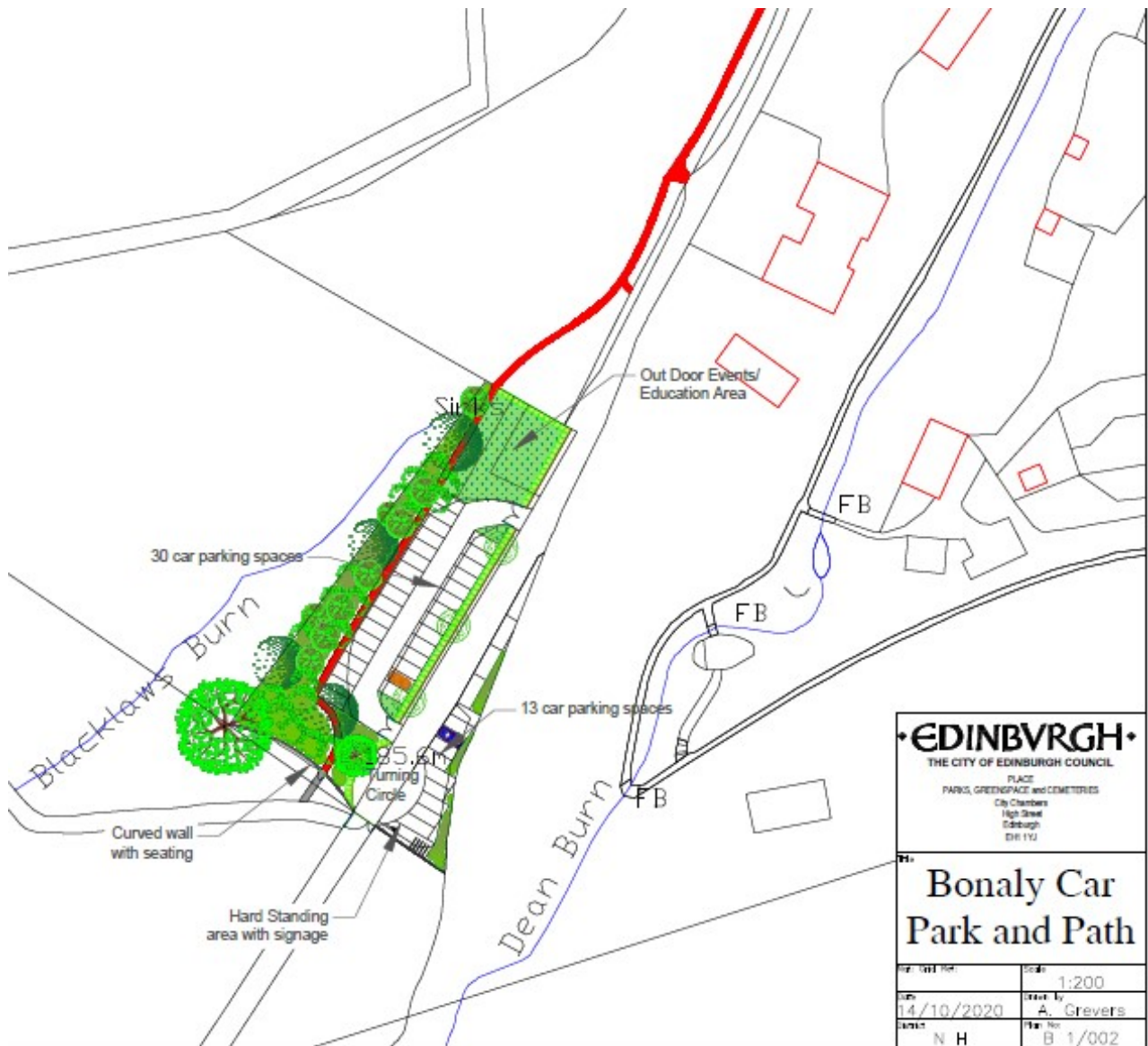
Flotterstone car park: installation of barriers and charging system, installation of electronic barrier at start of private road (to alleviate pressure on the residents and fisheries), car park infrastructure improvements (creation of spaces to replace those lost on approach road to car park due to pedestrianisation, parking space delineation, one-way signage, two electric charging points). Strategic approach: we are in discussion with Transport Scotland re: permanent installation of a Clearway on the A702 to prevent displacement parking (to replace new temporary Clearway).

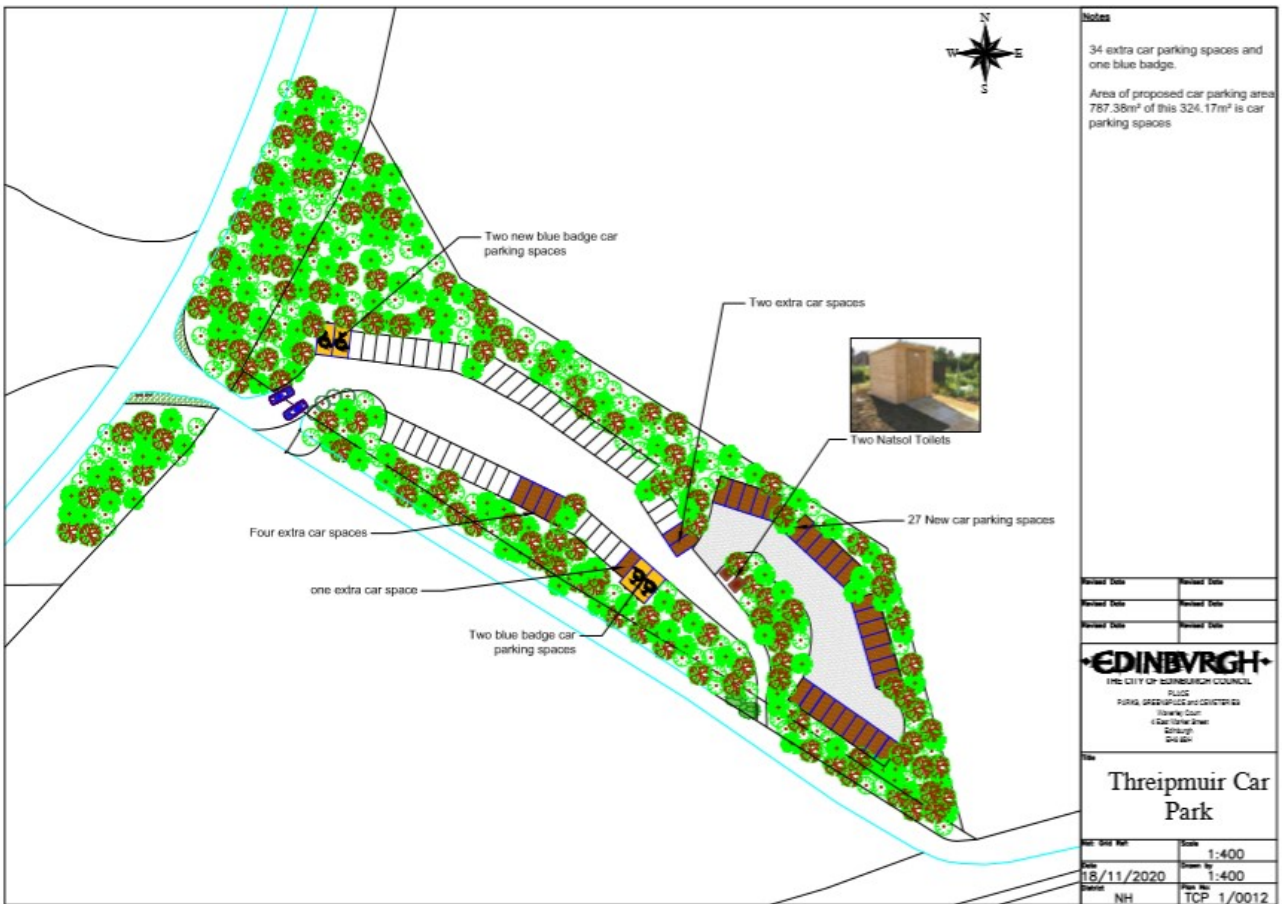
Bonaly Country Park: In 2019, CEC acquired land on the periphery of Bonaly Country Park that was previously leased to create weekend parking provision. The land is currently not fit for purpose as it is a small grassy field with a little hard standing. It cannot be opened in winter or during wet weather as cars get stuck in the mud. It is not currently suitable for disabled access due to the gradient and lack of surfacing. The proposals are to restructure the current car park to incorporate the newly acquired land, installation of a charging system, blue badge spaces and improved signage. We will also improve the off-road path to avoid pedestrians/cyclists going on the narrow access road. Strategic approach: improve off-road path to provide safer access for pedestrian/cycles to the Country Park entrance. Continue to promote local public transport links. Four new bicycle racks are scheduled for installation in 2020/21 as part of the Active Travel programme.

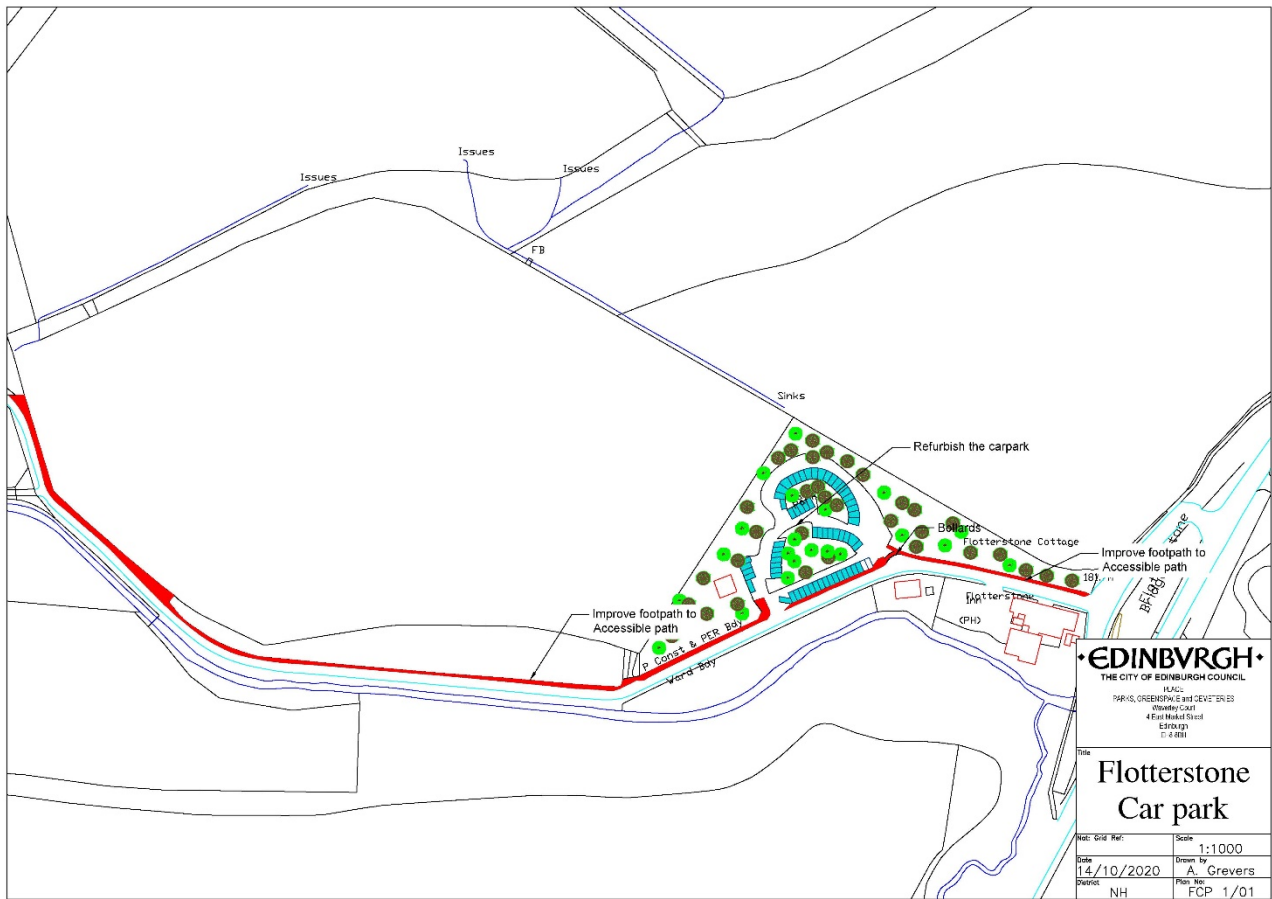
Harlaw car park: restructuring/expansion of car park, one-way system to manage traffic flow, additional blue badge spaces, signage and installation of charging system. Improve off-road path to provide safer access for pedestrian/cycles. Strategic approach: improve off-road paths that link nearby Currie and Balerno to reduce pressure on car park. Continue to promote local public transport links and investigate options for improving signage from nearest bus stance in Balerno. Four new bicycle racks are scheduled for installation in 2020/21 as part of the Active Travel programme.

Threipmuir car park: improved signage, restructuring/expansion of car park, installation of charging system, additional blue badge spaces. Strategic approach: continue to promote local public transport links and investigate options for improving signage from nearest bus stance in Balerno. Work with the community to promote and improve off-road routes.

Appendix 5 Car Park Designs - drafts







Appendix 6

Planning applications and certificate of lawfulness information

The PHRP team has applied for **2 Certificate of lawfulness and 2 Planning applications** to the Midlothian Council and the City of Edinburgh Council planning departments. These were done as **a requirement of the £430K worth funding bids as part of the Rural and Transport Infrastructure Fund from Visit Scotland**. These details were shared on the December 2020 Pentland Beacon issue which was distributed to landowners/land and fishery managers/ elected members and key stakeholders and Officers of the PHRP.

CERTIFICATES OF LAWFULNESS:

There is no provision for the public to make comments on certificates of lawfulness and prior notifications and these details are for information only. Applications are assigned to a Planning Officer who has the responsibility for assessing the application in relation to National and Council policies, carrying out the necessary consultations and preparing a report. Such an application is decided by Delegated Decision.

The PHRP team has shared the results of the 2020 Public Engagement with the relevant planning officer for each application.

1/ Flotterstone car park extension and installation of toilet facilities: Certificate of lawfulness **20/00723/CL**. The target date for this application to be considered by Midlothian Council is between 5 January 2021 to 6 March 2021 due to the unprecedented impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on [Midlothian Council's Planning Service](#).

2/ Threipmuir car park extension and installation of toilet facilities: Certificate of lawfulness **20/04598/CLP**. The target date for this application is 8 January 2021. [Planning and Building Standards Online Services](#).

PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

Plans, forms and other documents can be viewed online at [Planning and Building Standards Online Services](#). Comments should be made online at [Planning and Building Standards Online Services](#).

The PHRP team has shared the results of the 2020 Public Engagement with the relevant planning officer for each application.

3/ Harlaw car park extension and installation of toilet facilities: Planning application **20/05137/FUL** comments due date **14/12/2020**.

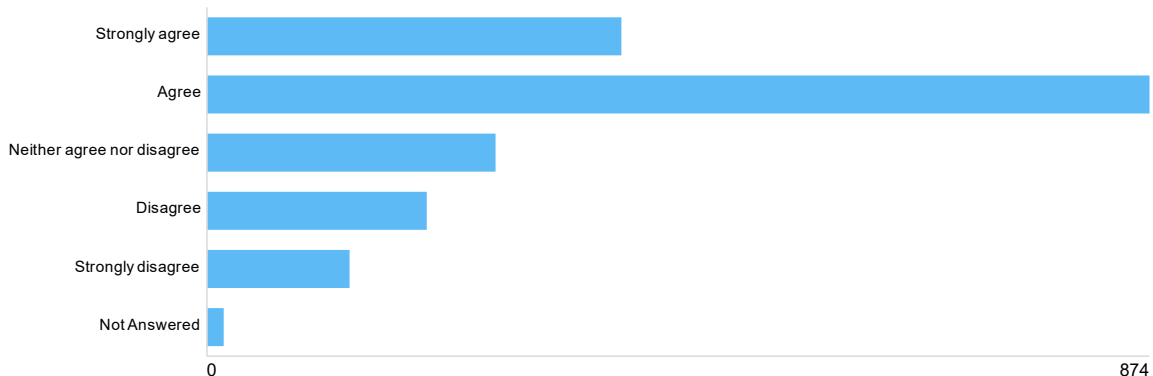
4/ Harlaw eco-campsite creation and installation of toilet facilities: Planning application **20/05112/FUL** comments due date **16/12/2020**

Appendix 7

2020 Public Engagement on the upgrade/expansion of the principal car parks: Question 8 only

Question 8: Do you agree or disagree that the proposals will improve parking at the four principal car parks in the regional park?

Support for parking proposal



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	383	20.46%
Agree	874	46.69%
Neither agree nor disagree	266	14.21%
Disagree	203	10.84%
Strongly disagree	132	7.05%
Not Answered	14	0.75%

The questionnaire attempted to capture those who were resident within the Regional Park boundary. A boundary map was provided with this question.

- **203** respondents selected **resident**
- **1,669** respondents selected **non – resident**

On investigating the answers, it appears respondents have selected being resident when they are outside the boundary but living in neighbouring locations.

Using postcode data provided:

- **19** were true postcodes within the Regional Park boundary
- 24 did not leave their postcode
- **160** were in neighbouring postcodes covering areas including Balerno, Currie, Bonaly and Colinton.

Using the above info on true resident views on the car parks improvement proposals:

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	4	21%
Agree	6	31%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	11%
Disagree	4	21%
Strongly disagree	3	16%
Not Answered	0	0

Non-resident views on the car parks improvement proposals:

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	40	25%
Agree	49	31%
Neither agree nor disagree	21	13%
Disagree	27	17%
Strongly disagree	21	13%
Not Answered	2	1%

Appendix 8

Cost for the proposed upgrade/expansion of the 4 car parks in the RTIF bid.

	Cash cost £	VAT £	In kind £
Signage	1500		
Interpretation	2000		2000
Construction			
resurfacing existing damaged parking areas	30000	3650	
new parking area ground works, surfacing etc	193500		2500
bay delineation, lining and wooden dividers	6300		
path ground works, surfacing, fencing etc.	60000	3000	2500
Landscaping	250		250
Other			
grit bins	570		
cycle rack for Flotterstone	200		
pedestrian safe access bollards for access tracks	2000		
barriers	10000	800	1250
ticket machine	42000	2400	3500
vehicle monitoring system	10000		
e charge vehicle hub at Flotterstone			1000
Contingency	30000		
Project management costs			15000
Total	388320	9850	28000
		TOTAL	426170

Cost breakdown for each car park

Estimated Cash cost £	Harlaw	Threipmuir	Bonaly	Flotterstone
Signage	375	375	375	375
Interpretation (+£1,000 in kind)	500	500	500	500
Construction (+£5,000 in kind)				
resurfacing existing damaged parking areas	18000	6000		6000
new parking area ground works, surfacing etc	7000	6000	180000	
bay delineation, lining and wooden dividers	1500	1500	1500	1500
path ground works, surfacing, fencing etc.	20000	10000	20000	10000
Landscaping	100			150
Other				
grit bins	140	140	140	140
cycle rack				200
pedestrian safe access bollards for access tracks	2000			
barriers	5000			5000
ticket machine	10500	10500	10500	10500
vehicle monitoring system	2500	2500	2500	2500
e charge vehicle hub at Flotterstone (in kind)				
Total	£67,615	£37,515	£253,030	£32,365

Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee

2pm, Wednesday, 20 January 2021

Introduction of mandatory parking charges at the Pentland Hills Regional Park principal car parks

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	Pentland Hills
Council Commitments	

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Committee supports the introduction of charging for the use of the Regional Park's principal car parks.
- 1.2 That Committee refers this report to the relevant Transport/Roads Committee in each of those local authorities where car park charging is proposed.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

Contact: David Jamieson, Parks & Greenspace Manager

E-mail: David.Jamieson@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 07825 552 288

Introduction of mandatory parking charges at the Pentland Hills Regional Park principal car parks

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Recent years have witnessed a range of growing traffic management pressures on the Pentland Hills Regional Park, exacerbated during the current Coronavirus pandemic. This report considers the opportunity of charging for car parking at the principal car parks, making recommendations based in part on an engagement exercise carried out with the public in late November / early December 2020.

3. Background

- 3.1 The PHRP has been growing in popularity over the years, with significantly more visitors accessing its principal beauty spots during the current Covid-19 pandemic. The last survey conducted in 2005/06 estimated 600,000+ annual visitors to the Park.
- 3.2 The PHRP team provides visitor and land management services that enable people to enjoy the landscape and wildlife of the Pentland Hills without damaging its environment. This allows them to engage with nature, take physical exercise and participate in outdoor recreational activities. Protection of the upland environment that people come to enjoy is therefore a key role for the regional park.
- 3.3 Many of the 18 car parks in the Regional Park (Appendix 1) were originally created to alleviate local problems which occurred when inconsiderate parking blocked farm and residential access. However, ever-increasing access to the hills by motor-vehicles means that they are regularly reaching full capacity, resulting in significant vehicle displacement at the most popular sites, which is detrimental to relationships with adjacent farmers and land managers, and undermines the effectiveness of parking provision.
- 3.4 Inconsiderate parking outside of the designated car parks cannot be controlled directly by the PHRP service. Rather, the relevant Roads Authority needs to introduce and enforce appropriate measures, such as parking restrictions through double-yellow-lining and/or Road Traffic Regulation Orders. Where parking is dangerous or is causing a road obstruction, Police Scotland is the enforcing authority.

- 3.5 At its meeting of 16th March 2012, the Joint Committee determined not to introduce mandatory parking fees at Regional Park car parks following concerns raised by Midlothian Council Transportation Policy Officers, who felt that this would displace parking at Flotterstone onto the adjacent A702 trunk road. Instead, a voluntary contributions scheme was introduced at the Flotterstone, Threipmuir, Bonaly, Swanston and Harlaw car parks, initially for cash contributions, and latterly via the online/phone RingGo facility. A suggested donation of £2 is advertised (and more options via RingGo), with all funds raised used only for new 'added value' projects within the Regional Park.
- 3.6 While a private landowner can (subject to planning permission) create parking facilities and levy a charge, a local authority requires to follow a statutory process under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This requirement applies even if a charge is not enforced. The legal process follows several stages:
- Formal Consultation - the Roads Authority writes to statutory bodies and other interested parties. This initial consultation is intended to establish whether there are any fundamental issues that would stop the proposal going any further. There is no right of objection at this stage.
 - Public Consultation - the proposal is advertised in the press and representations are invited. There is the right to object at this stage and all sustained objections are addressed at Committee where the decision is made whether or not to proceed.
 - If the decision is made to proceed, a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) will be made. Further press notice is required at this stage stating the date when the Order will come into effect.
 - The scheme can then be implemented. The TRO process from beginning to end can take between nine and twelve months; but may take longer.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Between 06/11/2020 to 04/12/2020 the Pentland Hills Regional Park held an online public engagement exercise. The engagement centred around anti-social behaviour and traffic management problems, which had been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. From 1864 responses, 66.35% supported charging; 20.78% favoured no charge introduction; and 12.88% were unsure / did not answer.
- 4.2 It has been possible to extrapolate data from respondents stating that they live in the Regional Park. Of these 203 respondents, only 19 provided a postcode which confirms that they live within the PHRP (Appendix 4). The remainder live close to the Regional Park in areas such as Balerno, Currie or Bonaly. Of this group, 116 agreed or strongly agreed with charging for parking, as opposed to 54 who disagreed or strongly disagreed with charging.
- 4.3 Community groups that responded included 4th Currie Brownies and the 42nd Pentland Scout Group. They supported the introduction of parking charges.

- 4.4 28 other organisations responded, including the British Horse Society, Scottish Campaign for National Parks, Mallyen Angling Ltd, The Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society, Rosebery Estate Partnership and Friends of the Pentlands. Of these, 23 (82%) agreed or strongly agreed with the introduction of parking charges. However, Mallyen Angling Ltd, probably the biggest organisational user of Harlaw car park, was strongly against charging because of concerns about its potential impact on their angling business.
- 4.5 Regarding the introduction of an annual permit scheme, 52% were in favour of such a scheme, with 25% against.
- 4.6 An overwhelming majority (90%, 1574 respondents) felt that money raised from car park charges should be retained by the Regional Park for infrastructure such as car park and path improvements. It is therefore considered important that to retain the support of those visiting the Park any car park charging solution ringfences income to be spent in the PHRP.

5. Next Steps

Option 1: Charge for car parks using City of Edinburgh Council facilities such as ticket machines and traffic wardens and Midlothian Council facilities at Flotterstone.

- 5.1 Ensure surrounding roads are adequately covered by parking restrictions such as double-yellow lines or clearways (Mansfield Road, Rigg Road, Harlaw Road).
- 5.2 Investigate the practicalities of a discount scheme for regular users.
- 5.3 Source ticketing machines and introduce enforcement by Traffic Wardens using existing contract arrangements.
- 5.4 Any income generated would be part of the overall Council transport budget to improve roads and associated infrastructure. The charges would not be a revenue and a necessary agreement would need to be made for an annual reinvestment to PHRP maintenance of car park infrastructure and possibly footpath upgrading.

Option 2: Charge for car parks using a private contractor.

- 5.5 Ensure surrounding roads are adequately covered by parking restrictions such as double-yellow lines or clearways.
- 5.6 Investigate the practicalities of a discount scheme for regular users.

Contract a private company to install ANPR (Automated Number Plate Recognition) CCTV systems which automatically penalise vehicles that have not purchased a ticket. The expected revenue would be 100% of ticket sales to the Regional Park, with the private company retaining revenue from fined vehicles. Evidence suggests that this option presents a higher likelihood of parking fee compliance. It can also incorporate a discount scheme for regular users.

Option 3: Continue with existing donation scheme.

- 5.7 Ensure surrounding roads are adequately covered by parking restrictions such as double-yellow lines or clearways.
- 5.8 Improve the publicity around this scheme to increase donation rate.
- 5.9 Explore additional/improved contactless donation to supplement the cash boxes already in place.
- 5.10 Find another design for cash donation boxes to deter theft and promote donation. It should be noted that valuable staff resource is deployed to empty and process the cash donation boxes.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Option 1 – Initial set-up costs (provision of electricity to car parks), but ongoing costs to private parking attendant company (no quote available yet).
- 6.2 Option 2 – Initial set-up costs (provision of electricity to car parks), but lower ongoing costs (no quote available yet).
- 6.3 Option 3 – Estimated budget of £6,000 for new cash box design and new signage. On-going cost with regards to PHRP staff to empty and process the donation.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 An initial meeting to explore solutions was held with Ward members and stakeholder representatives on 5 August 2020.
- 7.2 PHRP Joint Committee held on 8 September 2020.
- 7.3 PHRP Consultative Forum on 27 October 2020.
- 7.4 PHRP Public Engagement Exercise from 06/11/2020 to 04/12/2020.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 Introduction of Charges for Car Parking – Informal Consultation Report, item 6 PHRP Joint Committee, 22 July 2011
- 8.2 Car Parking Charges Update, item 7 PHRP Joint Committee, 16 March 2012
- 8.3 “2005-06 Pentland Hills Visitor Survey”

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 Parking areas in the Pentland Hills Regional Park, table and map

- 9.2 Appendix 2 2020 Public Engagement section on the introduction of mandatory car park charges
- 9.3 Appendix 3 Main themes and sample of comments from the Public Engagement comments on introduction of mandatory car park charges proposal
- 9.4 Appendix 4 2020 Public Engagement on the introduction of mandatory car park charges: Question 17 & 18

Appendix 1

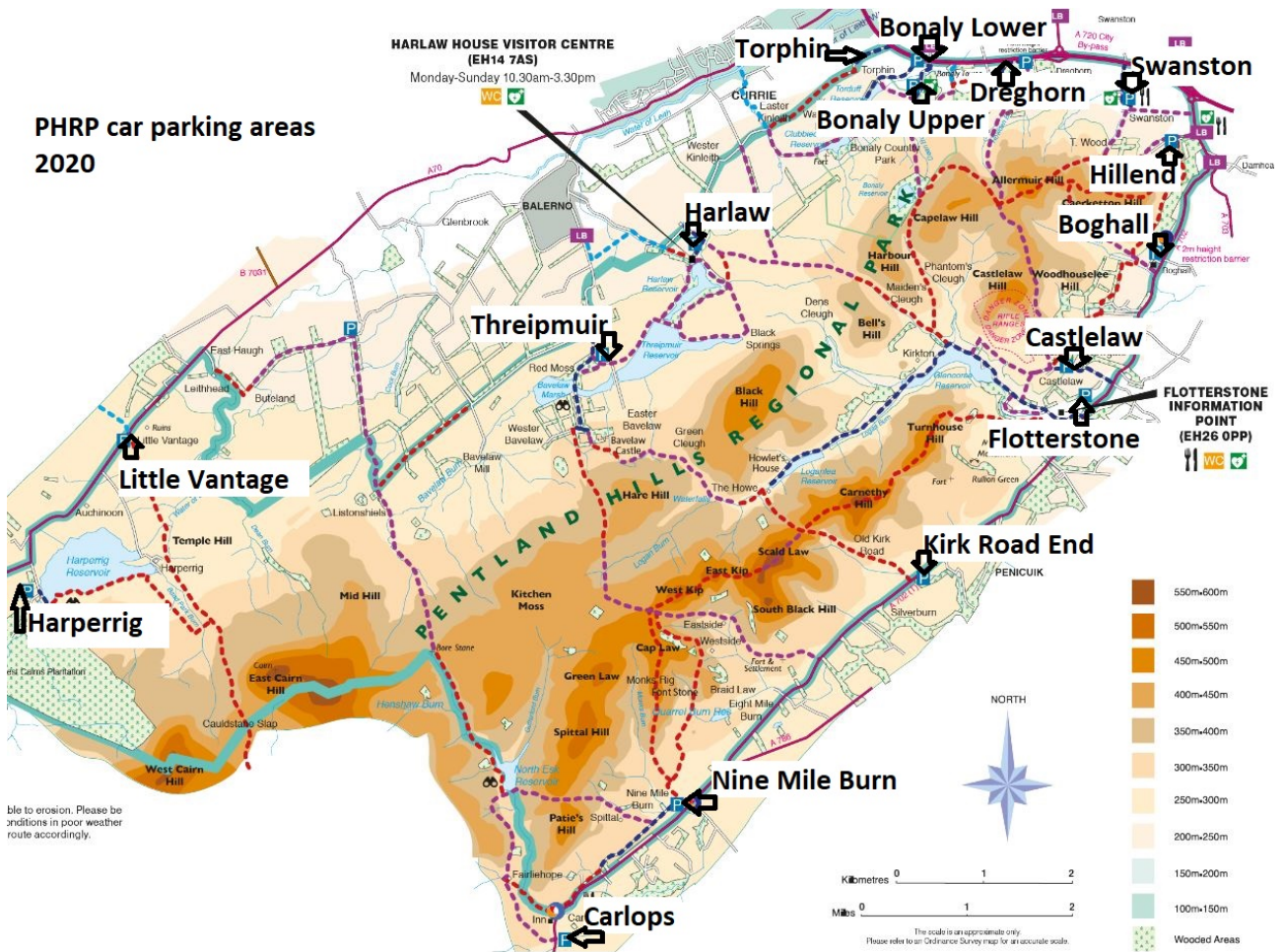
Parking areas in the Pentland Hills Regional Park, table and map.

Entrances to the Regional Park where parking is possible	Spaces	Blue badge spaces	description	LA area	Owner / responsibility	Notes
Carlops	14		Car park	Scottish Borders Council (SBC)	SBC	Informal. Not in PHRP
Nine Mile Burn EH26 9LZ	10	0	Car park	Midlothian Council (MLC)	MLC	Some spaces used by residents
Kirk Road End	8	0	Lay-by	MLC	Bear Scotland	
Flotterstone Visitor Information Point & café EH26 0PP	68	3	Car park	MLC	MLC	Donation box in place
Castlelaw	6	0	Car park	MLC	Ministry of Defence (MoD)	Informal parking area
Boghall EH10 7DX	20	0	Car park	MLC	SRUC	Due to be reduced in size
Hillend Upper EH10 7DU	24	0	Car park	MLC	MLC	Probably due to be redeveloped by Midlothian
Hillend Lower EH10 7DU	12	0	Car park	MLC	MLC	Probably due to be redeveloped by Midlothian
Swanston EH10 7DS	30	0	Car park	The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC)	CEC	Donation box in place
Dreghorn, car park	20	0	Parking on access road	CEC	MoD	No access for some time due to works
Laverockdale EH13 0QX	N/A	N/A	Street parking	CEC	CEC	Residential area

Bonaly Country Park Upper EH13 0PB	25	0	Car park	CEC	CEC	Donation box in place. Half car park grassed and requiring upgrade
Bonaly Country Park Lower (Torphin Rd) EH13 0PB	30	0	Street parking	CEC	CEC	Not used by residents - entirety available for PHRP parking
Torphin Quarry, street parking, free, EH13 0PQ	N/A	N/A	Street parking	CEC	CEC	Used by residents at top of road
Harlaw Visitor Information Point / Reservoir EH14 7AS	31 +20 on access track	3	Car park	CEC	CEC (access track owned by Rosebery Estates)	Donation box in place
Threipmuir Reservoir EH14 7JS	50	3	Car park	CEC	CEC	Donation box in place (broken)
Little Vantage	6	0	Car park	WLC	WLC	
Harperrig Reservoir EH27 8DH	12	0	Car park	WLC	Owned privately but CEC/WLC responsibility	

From the table above, the principal car parks can be identified as **Flotterstone, Threipmuir, Harlaw and Bonaly (Upper and Lower).**

**PHRP car parking areas
2020**



ble to erosion. Please be
conditions in poor weather
route accordingly.

Appendix 2

2020 Public Engagement section on the introduction of mandatory car park charges

Current Issues

The regional park needs to be able to fund its valued conservation and recreational management programmes. PHRP car parks are currently free to park in, unlike most other similar countryside destinations. Free parking encourages visitors to use their vehicles to access the regional park rather than public transport, walking or cycling. This can lead to overfull car parks and associated issues.

Our proposed solution

Introduction of car parking charges. Rates to be decided.

Creation of a “regular visitor” pass which would enable regular visitors to pay an affordable annual fee.

Displacement parking to be minimised by creation of Clearway on A702 and double-yellow lines (and / or clearways) around other carparks.

Charging should be done in such a way that it does not disrupt traffic flow at entrances to car parks, and allows essential vehicles access without charging them

Funds to be used for improvement of car parks, regional park footpaths and other recreational management improvements.

Things to consider

Charging for car parks could impact those on low incomes already struggling to pay for fuel, tax, vehicle insurance etc – but the ten other parking areas for the regional park would remain free.

We introduced a donation scheme at these car parks in 2017-2018, with suggested £2 donation for parking. Although the scheme is used by some, it clearly does not reflect the usage of the car parks in question.

Question 17

Would you support the introduction of an annual charging scheme similar to a residents’ permit? Yes/ No/ Not sure

Question 18

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to car parks?

a/ “Car parking charges should be introduced at the four principal car parks in the regional park.”

Please select only one item: Strongly Agree/Agree/Neither Agree or Disagree/ Disagree / Strongly Disagree

b/ “Income raised through these charges should go towards regional park infrastructure (e.g. car park and path improvement).”

Please select only one item Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Neither Agree or Disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree

Question 19

Please let us know any comments you have on proposals.

Appendix 3

A small selection of comments to highlight each main theme from the recent Public engagement.

Comments from those supporting charges (66.35%) included the following
<i>"Have no issues with parking charges that go towards the upkeep of the park and for facilities"</i>
<i>"The money collected would have to back to the Pentlands upkeep"</i>
<i>"Please also improve access & parking for bikes & other sustainable transport"</i>
<i>"Needs to be enforced otherwise some drivers will still park without paying"</i>
<i>"£2 a day is a reasonable charge"</i>
<i>Must include means for electronic payment. Common, say in lake District national trust carparks"</i>
<i>"If you are talking charges per hour like those in town then NO I do not agree"</i>
<i>"This has to be carefully planned as there is the risk that people will park outside the designated car park to avoid paying any charges and in doing so create chaos on the access roads."</i>
<i>"People should be discouraged from driving to the car parks on the edge of the city (Swanston, Bonaly, Hillend and Dreghorn). People should be able to get there on foot, bike or public transport...there need to be more places to lock bikes."</i>
<i>"I would be happy to pay to park in the 4 main carparks but not sure I'd want to pay an annual charge unless i was guaranteed a space. I may consider though it and look on it as a donation to help the upkeep and protect an area I love,"</i>
<i>"I make a point of always paying via ringo when I visit, but it's not that well sign posted and I'm not surprised people miss it."</i>
<i>"if someone can afford to run a car, they can afford £2 to park"</i>
<i>"Do not make it voluntary. No one will pay it"</i>

Comments from those NOT supporting charges (20.78%)
<i>"I strongly believe it is the government's responsibility to fund looking after the car parks. It should be encouraged to exercise and enjoy the hills for all the mental and physical benefits that come from it..."</i>
<i>"We pay council tax. Car park should be free"</i>
<i>"For many, this is a local park which they should not have to pay for by, effectively, an additional tax"</i>
<i>"I don't agree with any charging. Full car parks mean you are a victim of your own success. Larger car parks? More car parks in different places?"</i>

“Paying to park will discourage people to visit. For someone who goes up to Harlaw about 5 days a week if I were to pay to park I would not be going. I would park further away and walk like most other people”

“Parking should be for blue badge holders only and should be free”

Appendix 4

2020 Public Engagement on the introduction of mandatory car park charges

Question 17 & 18

The questionnaire attempted to capture those who were resident within the Regional Park boundary. A boundary map was provided with this question.

- 203 respondents selected resident
- 1,669 respondents selected non – resident

On investigating the answers, it appears some respondents have selected being resident when they are outside the boundary but living in neighbouring locations.

Using postcode data provided:

- 19 were actual postcodes within the Regional Park boundary
- 24 did not leave their postcode
- 160 were in neighbouring postcodes covering areas including Balerno, Currie, Bonaly and Colinton.

Using the above info on actual resident views for question 17 and 18 we find the following results:

Question 17: Would you support the introduction of an annual charging scheme similar to a residents' permit?

Original results

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	964	51.50%
No	475	25.37%
Not sure	408	21.79%
Not Answered	25	1.34%

Using the above info **on actual resident views** we obtain the following results

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	8	42%
No	6	32%
Not sure	4	21%
Not answered	1	5%

Non-resident views results

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	84	53%
No	50	32%
Not sure	24	14%
Not answered	2	1%

Question 18: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to car parks?

Car park proposals agreement - Car parking charges should be introduced at the four principal car parks in the regional park.

Original results

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	590	31.52%
Agree	652	34.83%
Neither agree or disagree	233	12.45%
Disagree	164	8.76%
Strongly disagree	225	12.02%
Not Answered	8	0.43%

Using the above info on actual resident views we obtain the following results

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	6	32%
Agree	5	26%
Neither agree or disagree	3	16%
Disagree	1	5%
Strongly disagree	4	21%
Not answered	0	0

Non-resident views results

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	55	34%
Agree	39	24%
Neither agree or disagree	24	15%
Disagree	13	8%
Strongly disagree	28	18%
Not answered	1	1%

Car park proposals agreement - Income raised through these charges should go towards regional park infrastructure (e.g. car park and path improvement).

Original results

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	1194	63.78%
Agree	380	20.30%
Neither agree or disagree	141	7.53%
Disagree	34	1.82%
Strongly disagree	90	4.81%
Not Answered	33	1.76%

Using the above info on actual resident views we obtain the following results

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	10	53%
Agree	5	26%
Neither agree or disagree	3	16%
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	1	5%
Not answered	0	0

Non-resident views results

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	92	58%
Agree	27	17%
Neither agree or disagree	17	11%
Disagree	4	2%
Strongly disagree	14	9%
Not answered	6	3%

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