

**PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**

**Kinross-shire Local Committee**

**20 January 2022.**

**KINROSS TOWN CENTRE**

**Head of Planning and Development  
(Report No. 22/11)**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report advises members of previous consultation and agreement on the design and development of public realm improvements in Kinross town centre. It also recommends action to inform any additional required traffic management and signage in order to improve the management and operation of the use of roads and space through further review of data, surveys, and consultation.

**1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES**

- 1.1 The improvements in Kinross High Street are part of a long-term strategy for the town centre environment and economy of Kinross, which has been developed over the past two decades. It began with the Kinross Strategy in 1995, which was supported by the Council and local business partners to develop business and tourism infrastructure and the town centre of Kinross. Proposals were subsequently supported in the Local Development Plan and supplementary planning guidance in the Kinross Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 1.2 Since 1995, there has been significant investment in the infrastructure at Loch Leven via the TRACKS project to create a cycling and walking route round the loch, resulting in visitor numbers of around 250,000 per annum. A town centre relief road was subsequently constructed in 2012 to allow improvements to the town centre to be undertaken and support the development of business land. The business park infrastructure was constructed in 2014/15
- 1.3 The environmental improvements in the High Street complement these other investments in Kinross, providing a sustainable town centre environment to improve pedestrian accessibility, the retail and tourism environment of the High Street and support occupation for all fresco use and events.
- 1.4 Consultation on proposed designs was undertaken with the community and business to allow these to reflect, and accommodate, local needs. The regeneration of Kinross High Street commenced in March 2015 and was completed by mid-October 2015.

- 1.5 The works involved a complete upgrade of the existing streetscape in the High Street with high quality materials and street furniture. The road and footways in the High Street were all re-surfaced with a mixture of high-quality natural stone paving and new asphalt material. Footways were widened where possible and traffic calming features were included to make the High Street a safer and more pleasant place for pedestrians and to aid those with mobility impairments.
- 1.6 The focal point of the improvements was the creation of a shared space on the High Street, constructed entirely in natural stone. This is located outside the former town hall building which has also recently been renovated by a private developer. In this area, the delineation of the road has been removed and street furniture has been introduced to make this section of the High Street more pedestrian orientated. The shared space area includes underground power points to facilitate events and markets in the town.
- 1.7 The re-opening of the High Street after a 12-week closure to construct the shared space was celebrated with a street party in October 2015. This was organised by local businesses and the Kinross Local Events Organisation (KLEO). The event was attended by around 6,000 people who watched the 'Red Hot Chilli Pipers' on the main stage in the new shared space. The event provided a boost to local businesses as well as the vibrancy of the town. An event of this scale would not have been possible without the improvements to the High Street.
- 1.8 Works were delivered on-programme, on-budget and in a challenging High Street environment where the local traffic flows and access to the High Street had to be maintained to minimise disruption as much as possible during the works.
- 1.9 The scheme designs were subject of on-going review as part of the development process and further assessed on completion of the works in relation to their impact. This concluded there were benefits in terms of reduced traffic flow, enhanced use of space and had helped support investment in adjacent previously vacant buildings, most notably Kinross Town Hall.
- 1.10 Following completion, requests for further works to define the shared space were addressed through modified signage, reflectors on bollards and enhanced access point on the edges through the installation and relocation of bollards. Subsequent damage to bollards and the revised layout were addressed in April 2019.
- 1.11 Further requests from the Community Council were made to undertake an additional review of the scheme to assess whether the original shared space concept and designs was functioning as intended, or a more fundamental review of the design and traffic management arrangements was required.
- 1.12 These were unable to be addressed at the time due to capacity issues and the focus of work to address issues and provide support in relation to the Covid

pandemic. Further requests have been made to re-consider issues within the context of recent investment in improvements to the access route and car parking at Loch Leven along with anticipated greater use by visitors and all forms of transport.

## **2. PROPOSALS**

- 2.1 An initial internal review concluded that the design of the High Street space reflects the historic context in the use of natural materials and accommodates use by all forms of transport, with a focus on use by pedestrians as well as for temporary occupation for events and alfresco use. This is consistent with increased national transport and planning policy emphasis on prioritising increased use of space within city and town centres for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and social interaction as well as reducing, but not preventing, access by cars.
- 2.2 It is, however, apparent that there remain local concerns and perception that there are safety issues in the use and operation of the space. These relate primarily to car traffic and a desire for greater advance notification of the need for caution on entry into the area/ additional traffic management measures within it, rather than reliance on the design itself to slow traffic and influence behaviour.
- 2.3 Previous analysis has shown reduction in traffic volumes and vehicle movements with no evidence of any accident history. Subsequent action has limited any perceived or actual danger arising from vehicle/pedestrian conflict.
- 2.4 Given the length of time the scheme has now been in existence, there should be adequate local knowledge of the revised road and pedestrian space, but it is acknowledged that increased use by visitors arising from enhanced access to Loch Leven may necessitate the need for some adjustment to entry signage and traffic management. Data will be reviewed, and a traffic survey undertaken as soon as possible. Consideration will also be given to any potential increase and/or changes in modal split arising from improvements to car parking and the route to Loch Leven.
- 2.5 Officers consider that wholesale revision of the design of the space would be contrary to what has been agreed through past consultation, inconsistent with policy objectives and not deliver the benefits to the appearance and intended enhanced use of the space for events and/or alfresco use. In addition, a revised scheme would potentially have significant cost implications which are not currently budgeted for.
- 2.6 it is considered that any future survey work could be in relation to the operation and use of space to provide local opinion. This would supplement data on traffic movements and accident history and evidence future desired use to assist local event development and/or business occupation.
- 2.7 It is, therefore proposed that traffic and accident data be reviewed, and surveys are undertaken, consultation is prepared to seek local views on the

operation and use of space and that options are prepared for revised entry and entrance signage and traffic management arrangements. Thereafter, a report will be brought back to the Committee about appropriate work based on evidence of demand and need, while recognising there is no funding allocated to any such solutions at the moment

### 3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Extensive consultation has previously been undertaken to secure agreement on the design and development of public realm improvements in Kinross town centre. Following completion of the scheme, minor amendments were made to the design to improve traffic management and safety. Most recent evidence suggest that traffic management measures are working effectively but there remains local concern. Further review of data, surveys and consultation is required to inform any additional required traffic management and signage and the use of roads and space.

3.2 It is recommended the Committee agrees to

- i. remit to the Head of Environmental and Consumer Services to review traffic data and evidence, undertake traffic surveys and consider potential impacts of current investment in improvements to access and car parking at Loch Leven
- ii. remit to the Head of Planning and Development to undertake a survey to provide evidence of local views on operation of roads and current and future use of space
- iii. remit to the Head of Environmental and Consumer Services to prepare options for revised entry and entrance signage and traffic management arrangements
- iv. note that a further report will be submitted to a future Committee for agreement, which would set out any required improvements and any relevant resource and environmental implications.

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#### Approved

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