

Proposals to conduct feasibility studies of specific sites for the installation of motorhome service points and overnight parking facilities.



By: Highland Campers Ltd. t/a Highland Campervans

Introduction:

Touring the Highlands in a motorhome, campervan or caravan has become increasingly popular over the past 10 years. In particular, the launch of the “North Coast 500” in 2015 has resulted in an average 26% increase in visitors to the Highlands (HIE report – “NC500 Economic Baseline Study”). This report also highlights challenges to ensure long term success of the NC500. These include maintaining the condition of the route, ensuring sufficient parking, waste facilities and public toilets, and continued efforts to encourage better driving.

Highland Campervans was established in 2007 by Catherine & Stephen Bunn and has been operating a fleet of campervans and motorhomes for hire from Inverness for more than 10 years. The business has grown over time to encompass motorhome sales and a repair & servicing workshop, both of which are recognised and approved by the National Caravan Council. As such, the business is now recognised for its expertise and industry knowledge, and has been asked to advise on what facilities are needed to ensure the growth in motorhome tourism can be properly supported and sustained.

In November 2017, Highland Campervans issued “A report on the provision of motorhome facilities in the Scottish Highlands” which gave an overview of the facilities needed to ensure motorhomes (including campervans & caravans) can dispose of on-board wastewater and refill and re-charge their vehicles in a safe and environmentally sustainable way. In response to this report, we have been approached by The Highland Council and other interested parties and asked to submit proposals for conducting feasibility studies of specific sites for the installation of motorhome facilities at various locations in the Highlands and Islands.

The following list shows the considerations that we take into account when assessing a site for its suitability as a motorhome service point. (Not all points will apply to every site, and some sites may have other considerations not listed here).

Typical content of a feasibility study:

Space requirements and proposed site layout:

Assessment of the existing site with regard to space & suitability for motorhomes.
Preparation of potential site layout including turning areas, utility connection points, access & egress.

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(Requires: As-built drawings of the existing site showing site boundaries and buried services (Water, Wastewater, Surface Water Drainage, Power, Telecoms). If drawings are not available it will be necessary to commission a topographical survey of the site.

Water supply:

Assess existing water supply and compare to existing and proposed future demand.
(Requires a request for Scottish Water data)

Power supply:

Assess existing power supply capacity and compare to current & future demand.
(Requires a request for SSE data)

Wastewater drainage:

Assess wastewater drainage capacity and compare to current & future demand. Determine the type of wastewater treatment facility (e.g. septic tank or WWTW) and assess ability to cope with increased flows and loads - in particular the types of toilet chemicals commonly used in motorhomes.
(Requires a request for Scottish Water data).

Surface water drainage:

Assess existing surface water drainage and determine suitability to cope with accidental spills of wastewater without impact on the environment.

Waste & Recycling facilities and collections:

Determine if the site is served by existing waste & recycling collections. Assess the current volume collected and estimate the potential increase in demand.

Telecoms provision:

Telecoms may be required if a parking monitoring system or CCTV is to be installed. Determine if an existing phone line is present, and determine the extent of mobile telephone reception on the site for multiple networks.

Planning permission:

Seek advice and opinion from a planning advisor to determine if the proposed development is likely to require planning permission.

Environmental impacts:

Assess the area for potential environmental and archaeological sensitivities using public source information. (More detailed environmental impact assessments may be required later if planning consent is required).

Flooding:

Assessment of the site using public source information to assess the potential for flooding.

Neighbours and other potential stakeholders:

Identify potential neighbours and other stakeholders who may be affected (positively or negatively) by the proposed development. E.g. residential neighbours who may see or hear the site, local businesses who may benefit (cafes & restaurants) or potentially suffer (camping sites). At this stage, potential stakeholders would be identified by their proximity to the site – No consultation is proposed as part of a feasibility study, although this may be required as part of a future planning application.

Options for proprietary motorhome service points:

Several manufacturers offer proprietary units which integrate all of the facilities required for a motorhome service point. The feasibility study will assess these units and recommend any which are suitable for use at this site. In the event that none are suitable, the requirements for a bespoke design will be described.

Options for collecting payment for use of facilities and overnight parking:

An overview of the different options for collecting payment for use of the facilities will be carried out and presented in the feasibility study.

Other considerations:

Estimated costs for feasibility study:

Project management by Highland Campervans (including research, attending meetings, appointing and coordinating consultants / surveyors and report writing):	£300 / day
Engineering consultants to design & produce layout drawings and carry out utility assessments:	Tbc subject to availability of drawings and utility information
Topographical survey of the site	Tbc subject to availability of as-built site layout drawings

All prices plus VAT

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Critical path:

The critical path for completion of the feasibility study is the time it will take for the utility companies to provide the data required for the utility assessments. This is typically 8 weeks following the submission of a data request. Allowing 1 week to engage and brief consultant engineers, 8 weeks for provision of utility data, 2 weeks for processing the data and drafting the engineer's reports and 1 week for final report compilation, review & sign-off, the predicted timescale for completion of the feasibility study is 12 weeks.

The timescale could be significantly reduced if the required information is readily available from the landowner and utility data requests can be avoided.

Project Communications:

Highland Campervans will require a named person or persons to act as project sponsor & client representative. The project sponsor should have the authority to approve expenditure, and the client representative should be available to deal with day to day project communications including progress reports and requests for information.

Letter of appointment:

Highland Campervans will require a letter of appointment or other such written approval before commencing work on the feasibility study.

Methods of payment:

Methods of payment for Highland Campervans and for any consultants or sub-contractors will need to be discussed and agreed before commencing work on the feasibility study.

Qualifications:

Stephen Bunn, Highland Campervans director, has previously worked as a project manager for Scottish Water, delivering engineering projects around the Highlands. A CV detailing his qualifications and experience is available on request.

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