

Physical Distancing Measures for Pedestrians in Perth and Kinross Town Centres

This report details the initial temporary measures recommended to reduce un-necessary contact between pedestrians, and restrict the spread of the COVID-19 virus:

- ~ Make narrow footways in town centres one-way on each side of the road
- ~ Make bridge footways and other selected sites one-way on each side of the road
- ~ Highlight constrained areas with warning signs to encourage self-regulating behaviour

1.0 Background

1.1 The largest concentration of pedestrian activity is in town centres. When the lockdown restrictions are eased, and commercial activity resumes, it is anticipated that pedestrian numbers will increase. To prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease, control of pedestrian movements will be required. The aim of the exercise is to provide where possible Covid-Safe High Streets and shopping areas.

1.2 The streets were assessed by the Traffic & Network Team, in consultation with the Centre for Inclusive Living Perth & Kinross, Police Scotland, the sustainable transport charity Sustrans, the Council's Structures & Flooding Team and the Council's Public Transport Unit.

2.0 Restricted Footways

2.1 Many of the footways in town centres do not have sufficient width to permit the recommended 2m social distancing. It is recommended that on narrow footways, wherever practical, pedestrians should walk along the nearside footway in the same direction as the traffic. To encourage this some streets will have straight-on arrows with supporting text for the nearside and a cross-over arrows and text for the offside. Tayside Contracts-Sign Shop has produced the designs in the form of self-adhesive stickers and wrap-around banners. The signs will contain the PKC logo and the Government-promoted "Stay Safe" message and these will be placed on street furniture and footways where required.

3.0 Obstacles

3.1 Frequently along the footways, there are fixed obstacles such as bus shelters, pedestrian guardrail and street lighting columns. There may also be temporary obstacles such as benches and bins, as well as people standing at a bus stop. Unnecessary moveable street furniture will be removed or relocated.

3.2 At conflict sites warning decals will be installed on the footway, on approaches to fixed obstacle, to advise members of the public of the hazard ahead. The warning decal could also be used at pharmacy's and post offices. On-street parking could be suspended at pinch-points to provide additional space for pedestrians. Wherever necessary, fixed and temporary street furniture will be relocated or removed.



Straight-on arrows, obstacle warning signs and wrap around signs

4.0 National Guidance

4.1 The Department for Transport has issued a series of new road signs which can be displayed on the public road network during the crisis. National guidance on their deployment has not been given but these will be deployed where appropriate on the public road network within Perth and Kinross. It is recommended that the blue information signs, containing the PKC logo, are also used across the Council area to provide consistency and assurance to the public.



TSRGD signs for pedestrians



TSRGD signs for drivers and cyclists

5.0 Pedestrian crossings

5.1 Pedestrians are also likely to congregate at signalised crossings in order to cross the road. At signalised junctions, a permanent demand for the pedestrian phase can be programmed into every cycle of the lights. The push buttons would be taped off so they cannot be used.

5.2 At Puffin Crossings, there is an app being trialled that can be used from your phone to activate the push button. Discussions are ongoing with Angus and Dundee City Councils, and the electrical contractor Siemens, about this and other options.

6.0 Wide Footways

6.1 In some areas, there are wider footways with sufficient space for people to pass each other safely. Signs and markings may not be considered necessary as physical distancing should be self-regulating but the warning signs could still be installed to allay public concerns.

7.0 Public Consultation

7.1 Consultation has taken place with other Council departments, Local Elected Members, Community Councils and support agencies. No consultation has taken place yet with directly affected local residents as some of the proposals are still being formulated; but community support will be essential to ensure compliance.

7.2 The majority of the restrictions proposed are advisory and considered to be short-term. No Traffic Regulation Orders are proposed for the directional measures so these cannot be enforced. However, Police Scotland will be invited to comment on the proposals before implementation by Perth & Kinross Council.

7.3 At some locations restrictions could be placed on vehicular access, or on-street parking, in order to provide pedestrians and cyclists with additional road space to negotiate busy areas. Further consultation will be carried out with Local Elected Members and the business community about the potential impact of such restrictions. Traffic Regulation Orders will be required for these measures so that these can be enforced. Police Scotland will be invited to comment on the proposals before implementation by Perth & Kinross Council.

8.0 Timescale

8.1 Tayside Contracts-Sign Shop are currently producing the self-adhesive decals.

8.2 Council officers were successful with an application to Sustrans and full funding was received for the initial temporary measures from the Scottish Government 'Spaces for People' programme.

8.3 The initial bid will allow the proposed signing measures to be programmed and delivered as quickly as possible for Perth city and the other main towns and villages including: Aberfeldy, Alyth, Auchterader, Blairgowrie, Bridge of Earn, Comrie, Coupar Angus, Crieff, Dunkeld, Kinross, Milnathort, Pitlochry and Scone.

8.4 A further bid will be considered for additional measures currently being investigated. Additional bids can also be made should other measures or issues be identified in time.

9.0 Site Assessments – Perth and Kinross

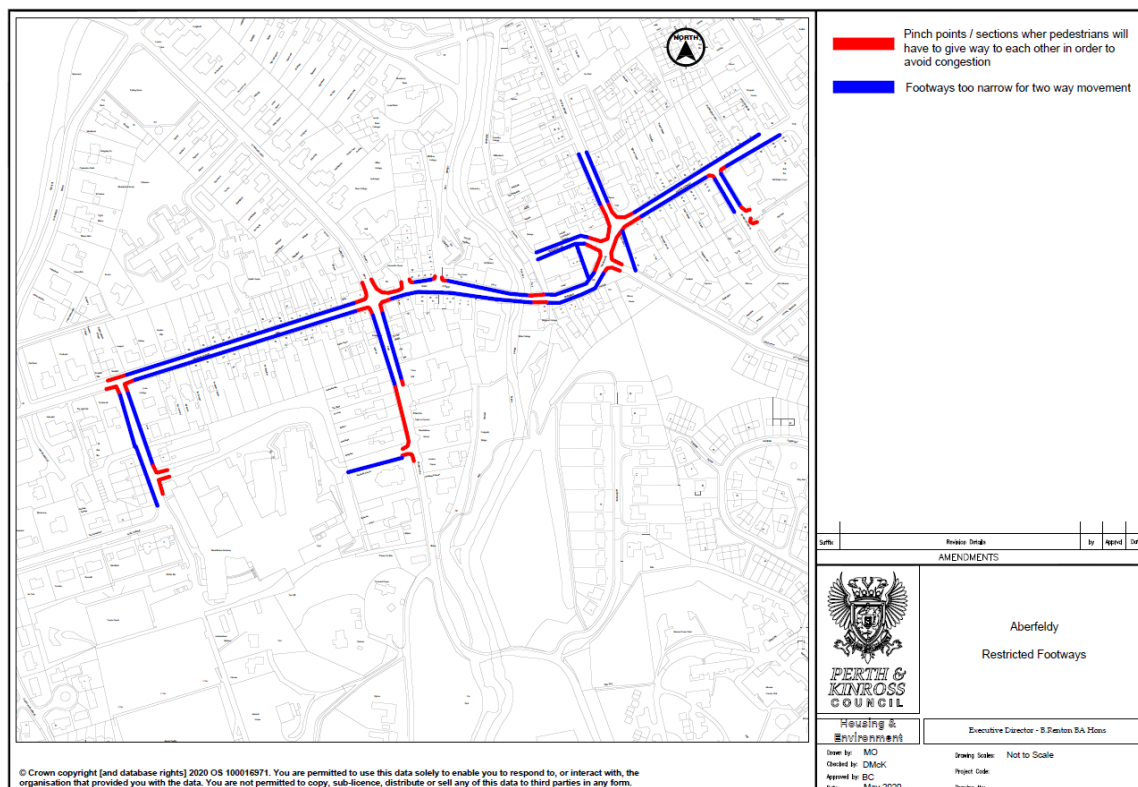
9.1 The centres of all the main burghs, towns and villages were assessed, with the focus being around the main shopping area, and the footways colour-coded. It is recommended that the blue direction arrows and circular warning decals are applied along the main streets as shown on the plans below.

9.2 Routes have been ranked into three categories. The first category is the quieter footpaths with lower traffic and pedestrians volumes. The second category is the streets with footways too narrow for two-way pedestrian movement (shown in blue on the plan). The third category includes the pinch-points where pedestrians will have to give way to each other to avoid congestion (shown in red on the plan).

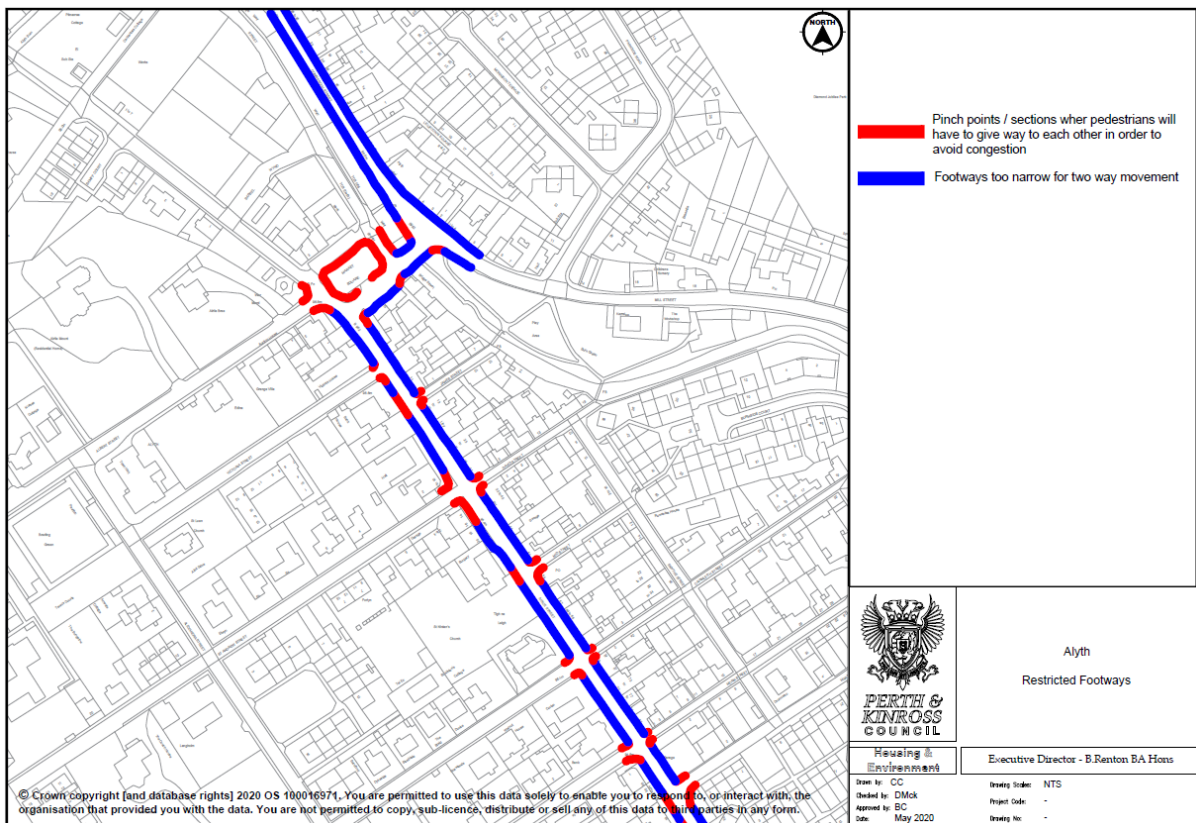
9.3 Other streets may still have restricted areas. It will not always be possible to avoid pinch points as alternative routes cannot easily be provided. It is recommended, in the interests of consistency and simplicity, to provide a single colour blue sign for the information signs and red signs for restrictions.

9.4 Further measures to improve walking and cycle links between essential community facilities are currently being investigated. Should other locations be identified then a further report will be provided for respective members to cover these projects in more detail.

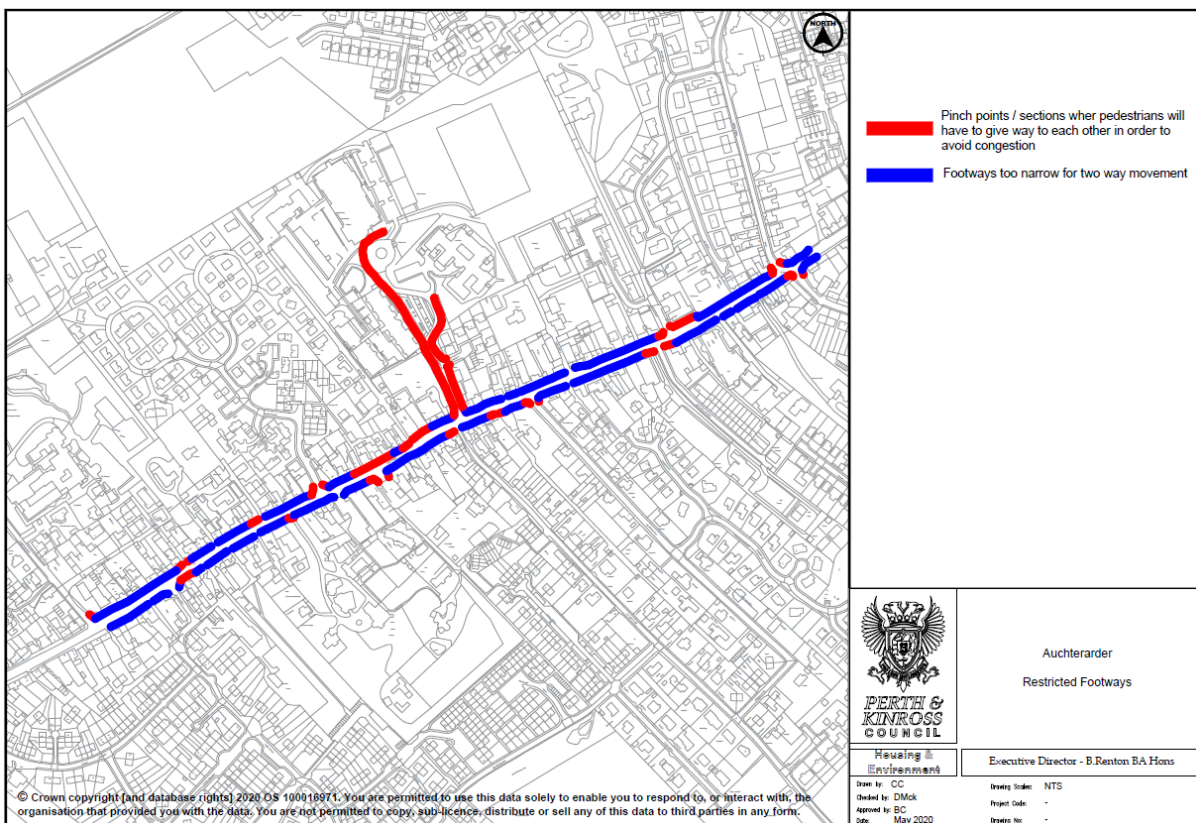
9.5 The main towns (by population) of Aberfeldy, Alyth, Auchterarder, Blairgowrie, Bridge of Earn, Comrie, Coupar Angus, Crieff, Dunkeld, Kinross, Milnathort, Pitlochry and Scone were assessed. As the project progresses, other villages across Perth and Kinross can be evaluated and signed accordingly.



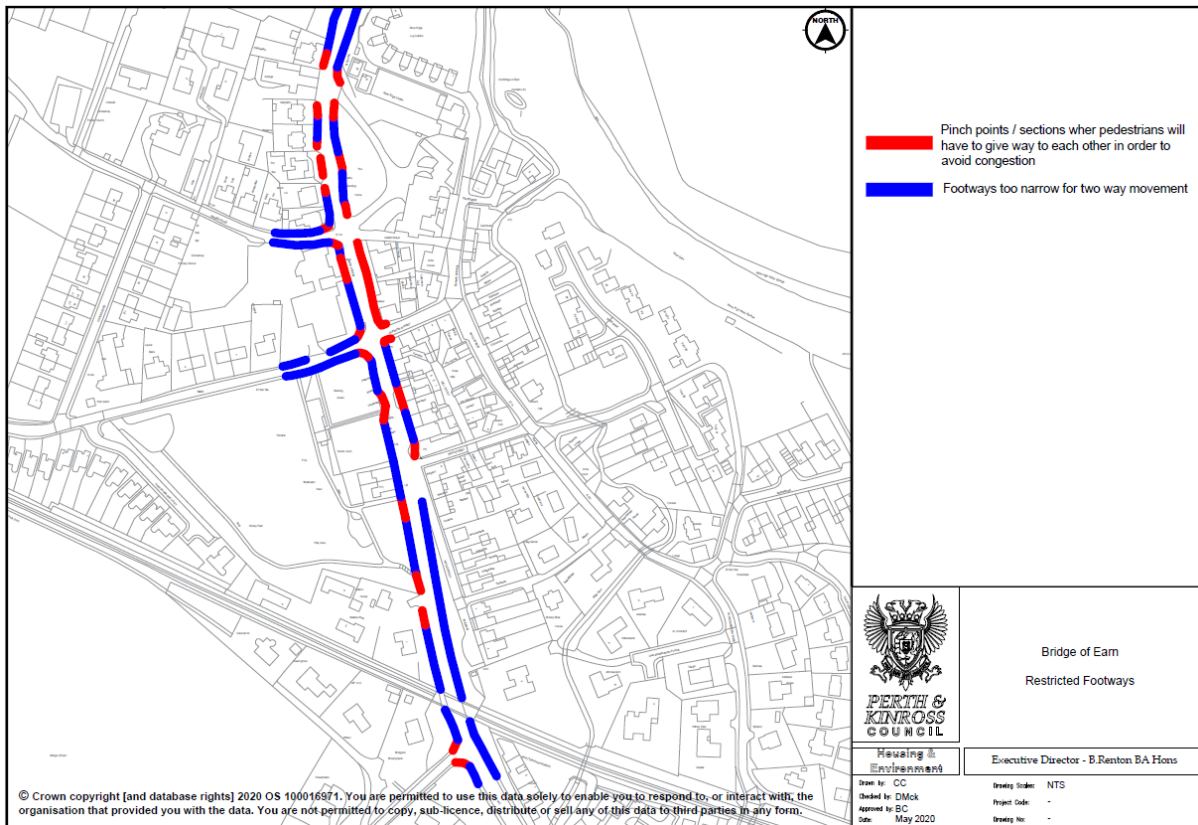
Map of Aberfeldy village centre



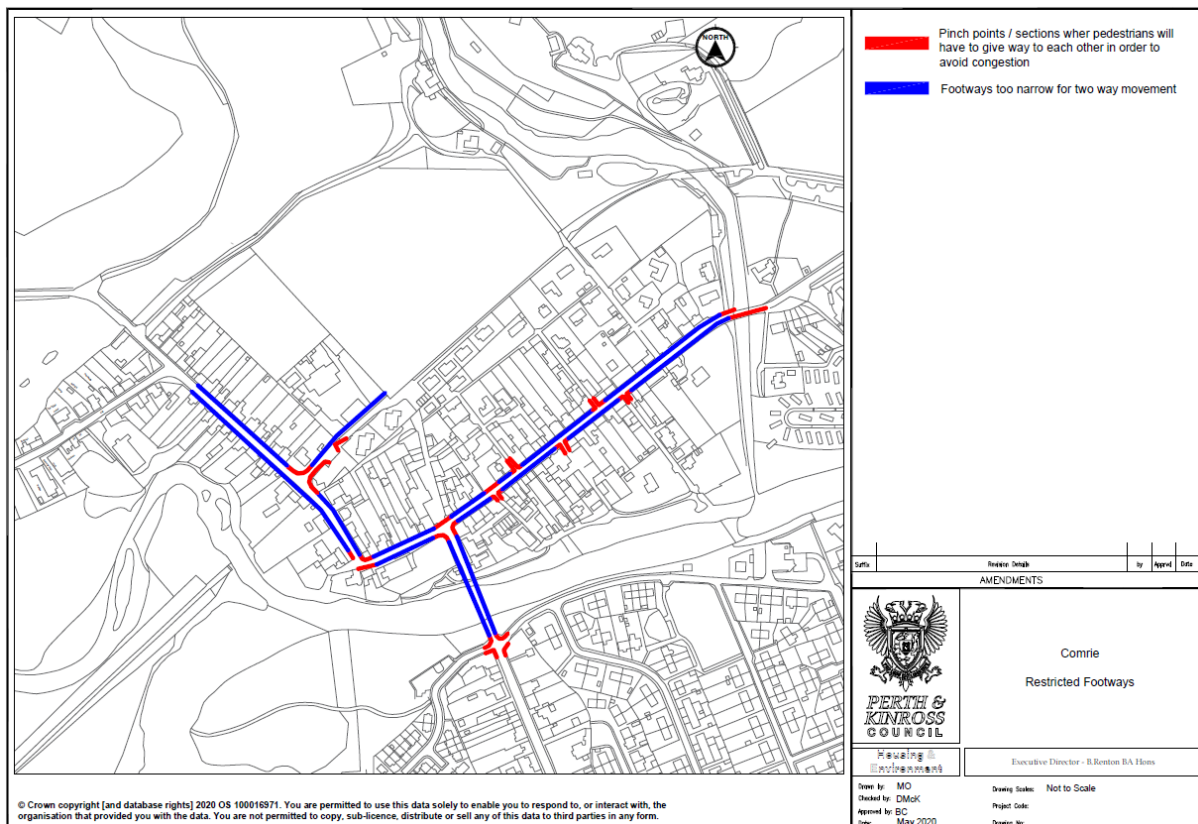
Map of Alyth village centre



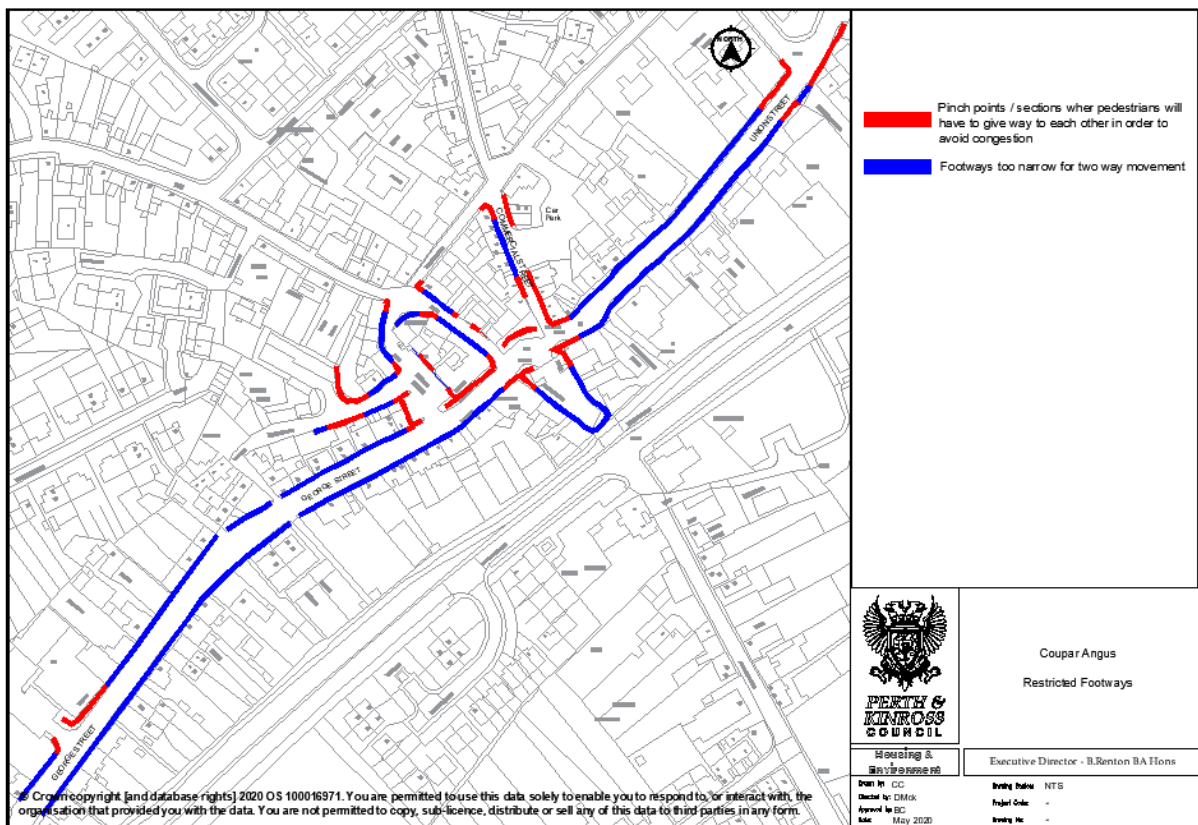
Map of Auchterarder town centre



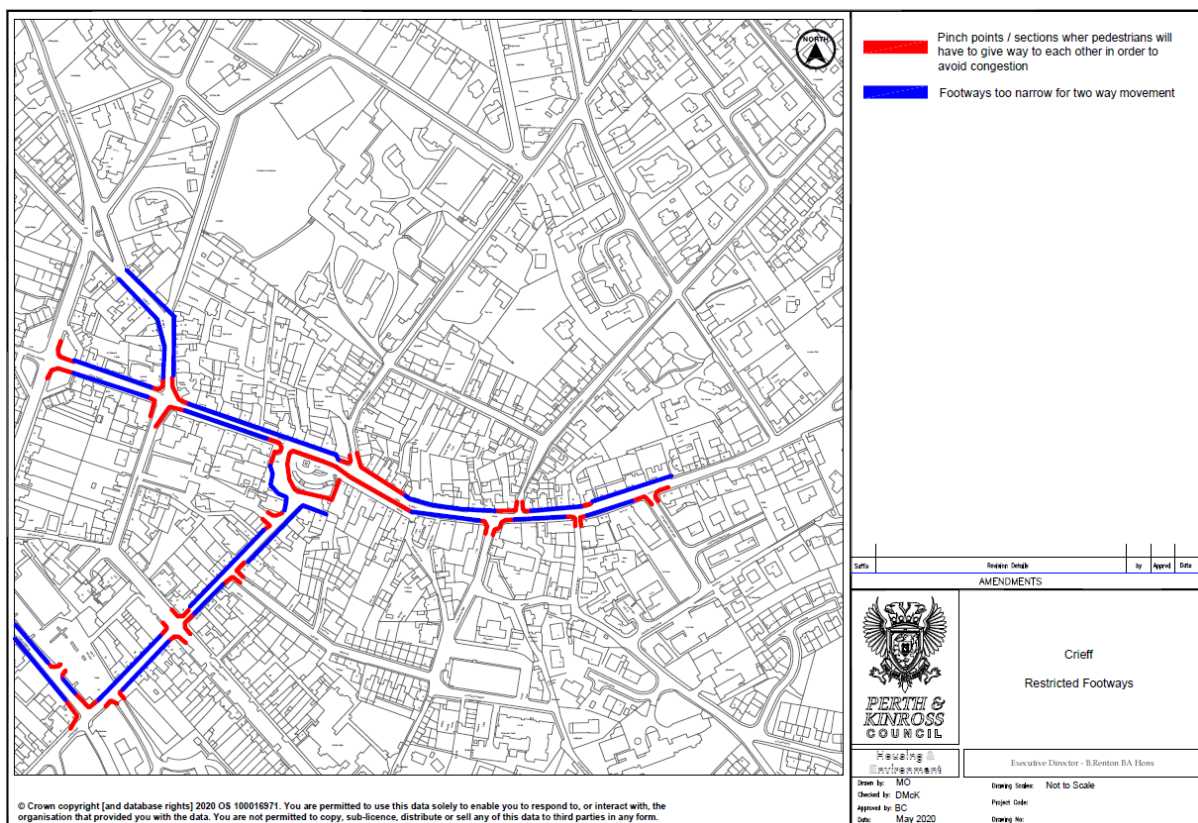
Map of Bridge of Eam village centre



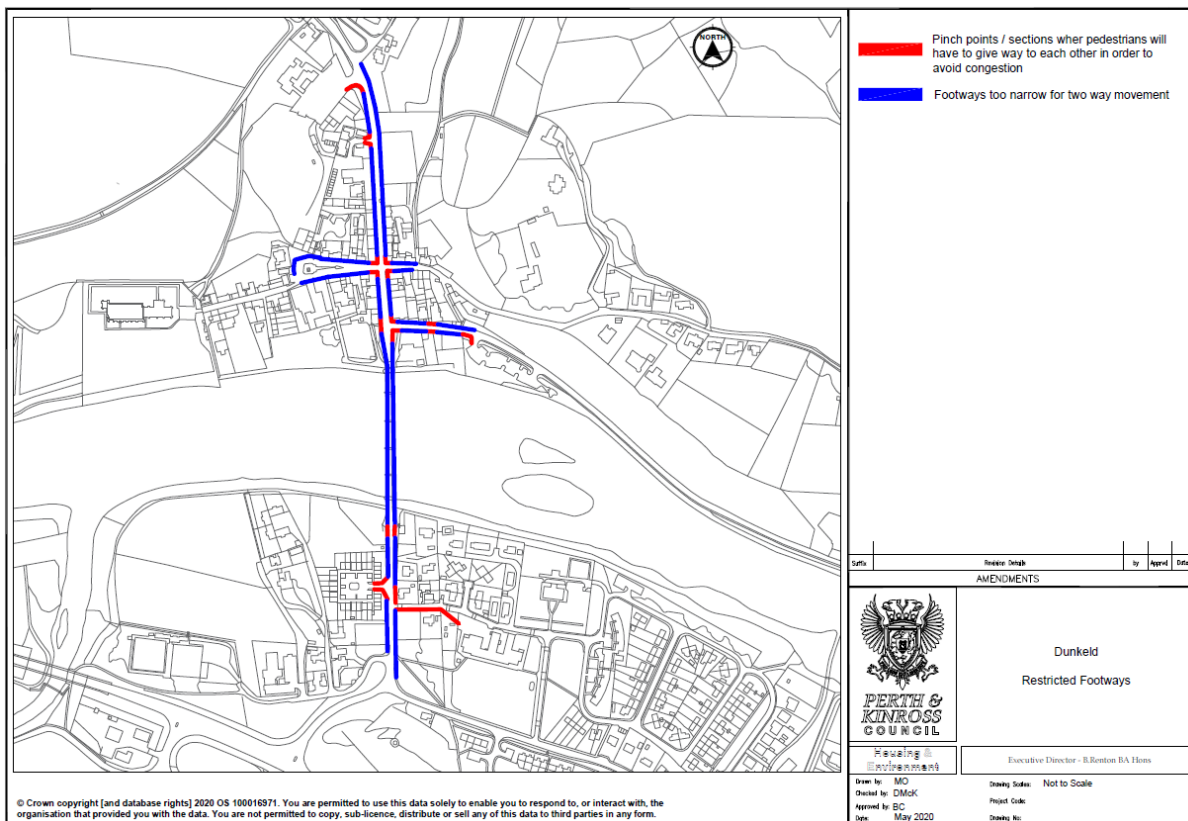
Map of Comrie village centre



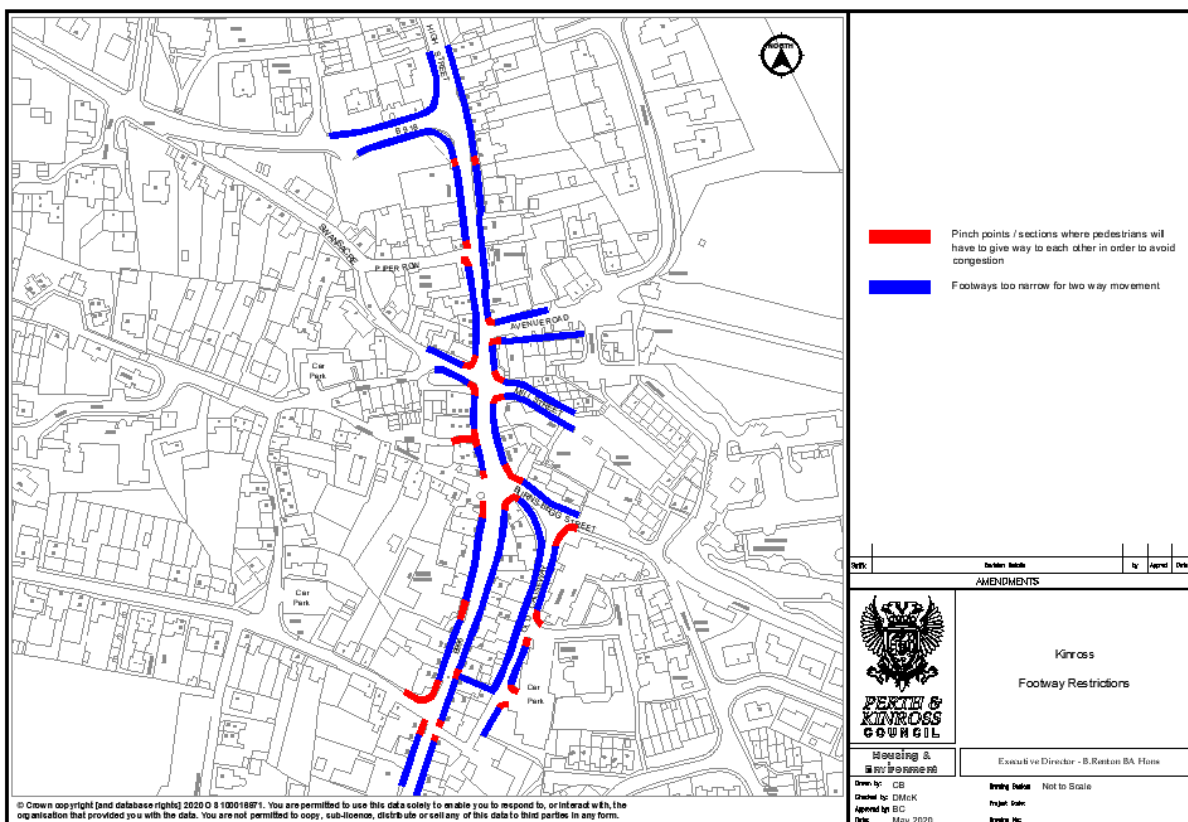
Map of Coupar Angus village centre



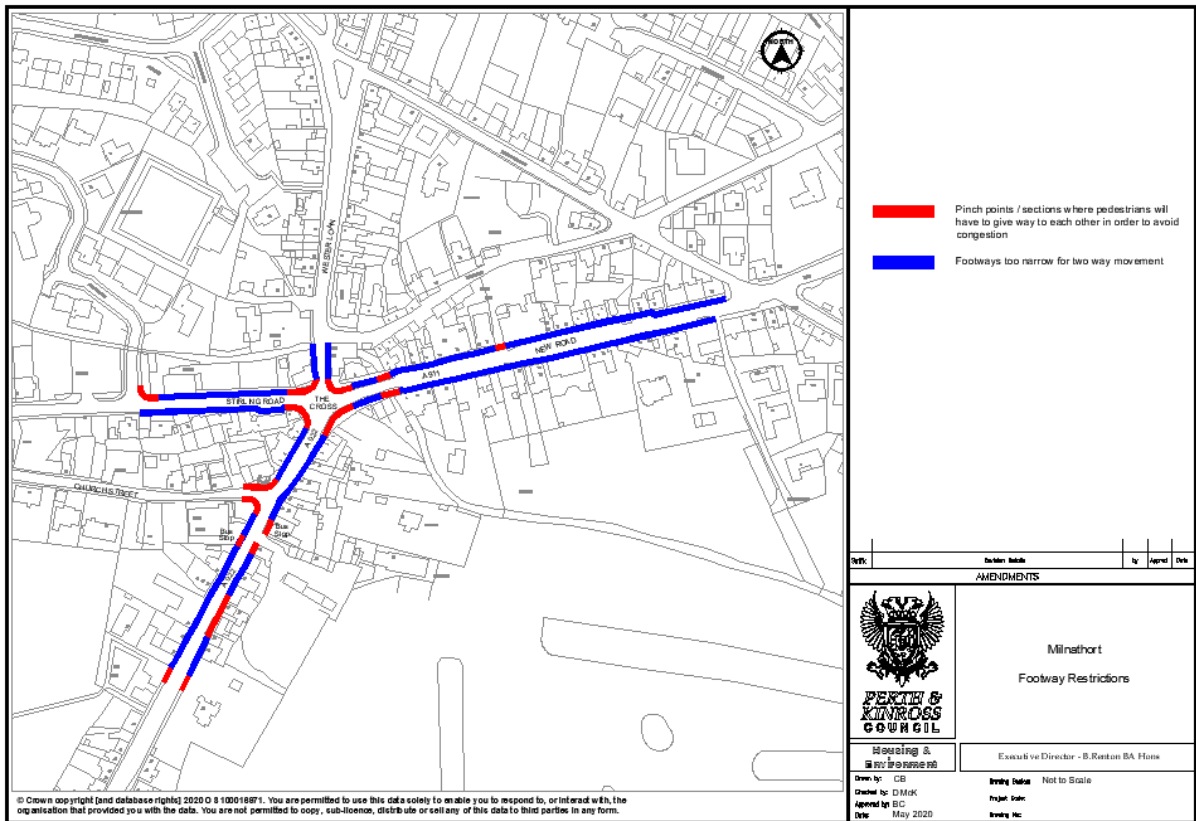
Map of Crieff town centre



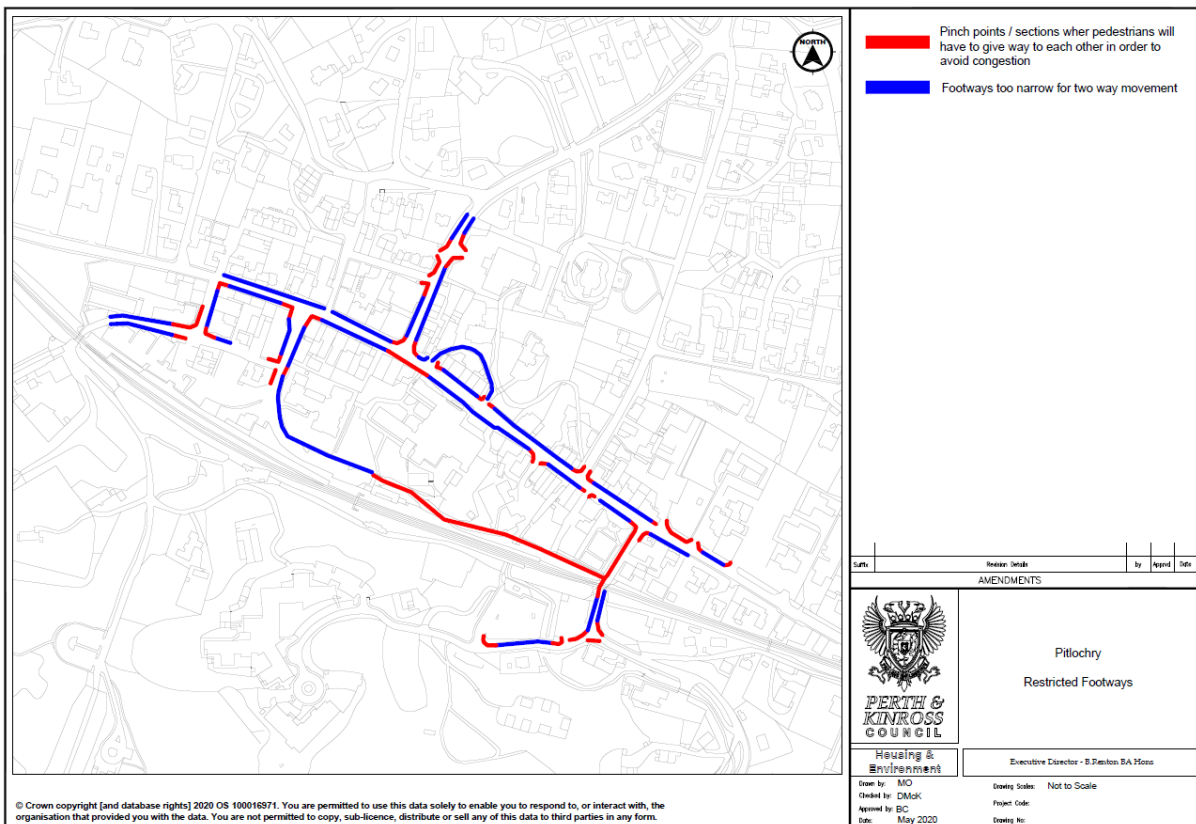
Map of Dunkeld village centre



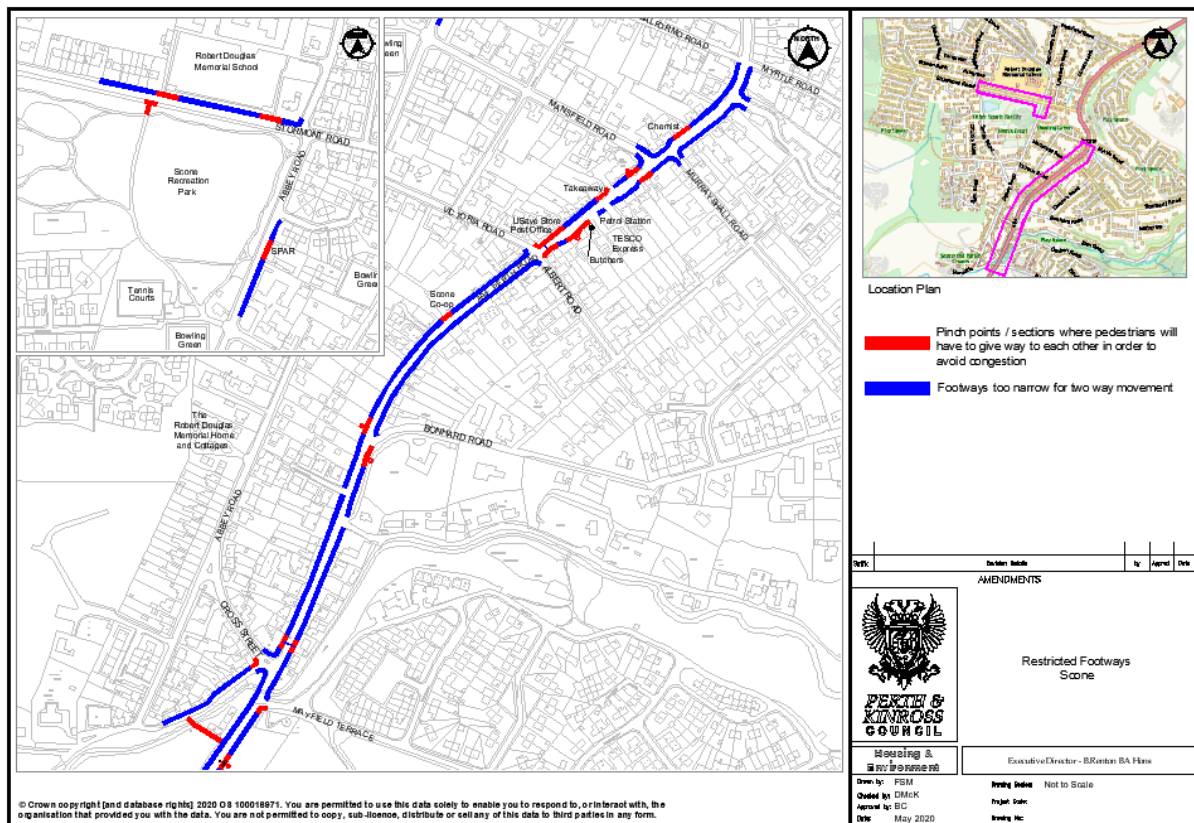
Map of Kinross village centre



Map of Milnathort village centre



Map of Pitlochry town centre



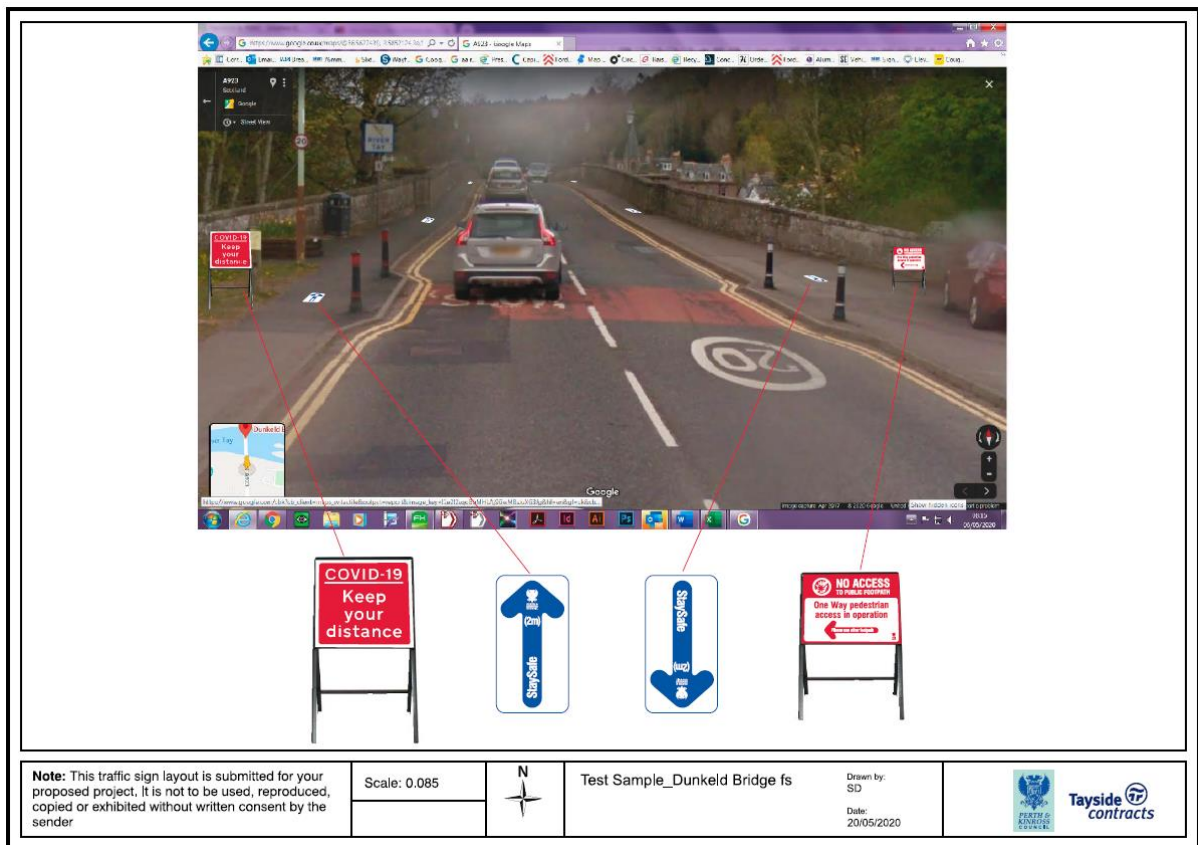
Map of Scone village centre

10.0 Bridges in Perth and Kinross

10.1 Pedestrian movement across bridges should be restricted to one-way on each side of the road. Decal markings on the offside footway will be supplemented by a physical noticeboard (A-board) where space permits.



Draft design of bridge closure signs



Proposed layout of signs and decals on Dunkeld Bridge approaching from Birnam

11.0 Summary

11.1 The COVID 19 pandemic has significantly changed the way in which people work and live. Unprecedented measures are required to help people stay safe, with instructions to stay at home to prevent the spread of the infection, and to maintain physical distance when outside home (whether for work or exercise).

11.2 The changes proposed will make it safer for people walking and cycling around Perth city and the other Perth and Kinross burghs when restrictions begin to be relaxed. It is also expected that this will lead to increases in the number of people choosing to walk or cycle and this should lead to sustained improvements in air quality.

11.3 As part of the process for bringing forward further proposed measures it is intended to notify local ward Councillors when proposals are being developed within their ward.

11.3 Should further temporary measures be identified to create safer spaces for walking and cycling a further funding application could be submitted to the 'Spaces for People' Scottish Government funded programme.