



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK SEPTEMBER 2021

INVERURIE, ABERDEENSHIRE



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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A town centre health check is recommended by the Scottish Government as a way of analysing the factors that contribute to successful town centres and indicate good standards of vitality and viability. Within national planning policy, the vitality of a centre is a measure of how lively and busy it is, whilst viability is a measure of its centre's capacity to attract ongoing investment (Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), paragraph 59).

Town Centre Health Checks have been completed in Aberdeenshire since 2003. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for robust baseline data, this report has been prepared using new methodology to showcase a fresh and updated approach for Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeenshire is an extremely attractive area with a variety of coastal and rural environments, commuter towns, high levels of employment, and there is considerable new housing and employment land planned for the near future. Maintaining town centres' attractiveness, activeness, and accessibility is vital for the region to be able to continue to thrive.

BACKGROUND

The importance of town centres is widely acknowledged. Town centres are at the heart of communities, providing a sustainable focus for shopping, business, leisure, services and community life, and shaping their sense of place. The planning system has an important role to play in supporting successful town centres, through influencing the form and type of future development. In order to assess how a centre should be supported, evidence of its current performance is required.

SPP sets out how successful, sustainable places can be created and maintained in Scotland. It is vital for town centres in Aberdeenshire to be successful and viable in order to provide for their populations and draw visitors.

Town centres with a vibrant retail scene, a wide variety of services, attractive buildings and open space create economic growth, attract more people to the region, and promote a sense of well-being and identity.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the results of the Town Centre Health Check 2021 for Inverurie. The results are presented to enable an understanding of the vitality and viability of the town centre. The results are not to be considered definitive of the well-being of a town centre, but rather they are intended to provide an evidence-based comparative perspective on this matter and assist in identifying actions that could be undertaken to improve and maintain their status.

WHY COMPLETE A HEALTH CHECK?

Health checks contribute to the planning system's efforts to support successful town centres through giving an overview of their current performance. They provide an analysis of the infrastructure and viability of the town centre which can be used to inform the Local Development Plan and decisions on planning applications. The findings are also utilised to create help a stronger "town centre first principle" policy.

METHODOLOGY

TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECKS SHOULD:

- Support implementation of the Local Development Plan
- Add value by collecting data on a wider set of indicators that provide insight into economic, social and environmental factors that play a part in the vitality of a town centre
- Have a clear, easy to follow and accessible format and methodology
- Work collaboratively both within the Council and externally with businesses and the community to collect and share baseline data
- Provide the foundation for other town strategies and plans and any subsequent funding applications

To achieve these results, the following methods of data collection and presentation were utilised:

DESK TOP RESEARCH

Desk top research was completed to provide the critical first step of gathering information for the town centre. Background information on the current situation of the town centre was then analysed further when out on site. Data was gathered from within the Council and from external partners.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The community survey was designed to gain an understanding of the views of both the residents and visitors of the town centre. The survey was available on Engage HQ, shared via a press release, advertised on the Council's Social Media and emailed to relevant groups to advertise further. The survey asked questions on several different topics and provided respondents the opportunity to identify what improvements they would like to see to the town centre. The survey was open for three weeks and received 256 responses. A summary of the responses received can be seen on page 49.



Look out for: Quote Boxes. Comments were asked for in both the community and business surveys and a selection have been included in the report to give a flavour of the different responses received.

METHODOLOGY (CONTINUED)

BUSINESS SURVEY

The survey was available on Engage HQ and shared via Inverurie BID and other relevant groups for completion. Several topics were questioned, including the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on businesses. It also gave an opportunity to comment on improvements they would like to see to the town centre. The survey was open for three weeks and received 43 responses. A summary of the responses received can be seen on page 49.

FOOTFALL COUNT

The footfall count was completed at three locations throughout the town centre to gain information on the vitality at different times of the day. Four time slots were selected to gain information of the vibrancy in the morning, afternoon and evening. The counts were completed for 15-minute periods on a weekday and weekend to try and gain an insight into the number of people moving around the town centre. These footfall counts were a team effort and carried out by Aberdeenshire Council Officers, BID members, Community Council members, and members of the community.

SITE SURVEY

This work was completed on a clear day and provided up to date information on the vitality and viability of the town centre. Several recording methods were used including maps, photographs and written analysis. The Place Standard themes were used to analyse the town centre and allowed for different themes to be analysed on an individual basis but also as a collective.

ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

Community Learning and Development officers worked with a group of five members of the local community and their families to undertake a walkabout of the town centre, assessing footway surfaces and obstructions, facilities and signage, maintenance and enforcement, personal security, crossing points and access to buildings. The survey took place on a clear day over three hours and participants included children, parents with pushchairs, young people and adults with limited English.

How a place looks, its history and what other people think of the place can affect how we feel. A strong local identity can help us feel pride in our place, our community and in ourselves as a result.

Observations: Those who use the town centre overwhelmingly feel positive towards it. The town has an extensive network of community organisations, strong, celebrated local heritage and a busy, independent retail and service environment which contribute to this rating as highlighted by the comments received in the surveys.

The growth of Inverurie: Inverurie is a royal burgh, and the second largest town in Aberdeenshire. It developed as a result of the opening of the Elphinstone Canal linking it to Aberdeen Harbour in the **16th century**. Prior to that Inverurie's strategic location meant that a number of battles were fought in the area including, the Battle of Inverurie (also known as the Battle of Barra) in **1308** and in **1411** the Battle of Harlaw. The Great North of Scotland Railway arrived in Inverurie in **1854** and shortly after that one of Inverurie's key buildings, the Town Hall, was built in **1863**. Between **1900** and **1960** Inverurie was known for locomotive engineering. It retains a manufacturing base and its role as a market town with a livestock market. Increasingly today, it is a commuter settlement. This type of large town is extremely mixed in terms of demographics. There is a particularly wide range of people, housing and activities.

Source: Understanding Scottish Places and Undiscovered Scotland

IDENTITY & BELONGING



How Do You Feel About Inverurie Town Centre?



81% Community

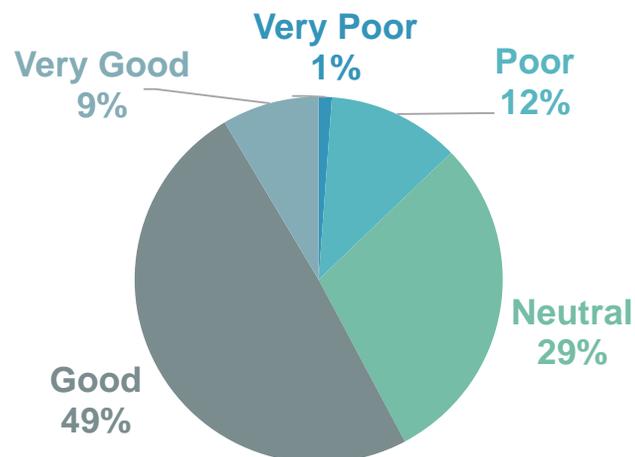
51% Businesses



19% Community

23% Businesses

IN YOUR OPINION, COMMUNITY SPIRIT IN THE TOWN CENTRE IS?



35 groups / organisations are operating in Ward 11 (which includes the town centre area)

"It is a town that has been there for many hundreds of years. The square in the centre is flourishing and has a real buzz."

"Very proud of the overall character of the town centre spaces, the community spirit and the variety of independent business, services and leisure facilities on offer within our town centre."

"It has a heart."

"Love my town hopefully it continues to prosper with local NOT big/chain businesses."

"I like the couthy residents and the range of shops."

"Positive compared with other surrounding towns, however I feel it is going slightly downhill over the last few years especially with the increasing amount of charity shops and also the vaping shops."

Feeling safe in and around the places that we spend time can have a significant impact on people's activities and on their health and wellbeing. Through their design and maintenance, good places should feel safe and secure for all, and help to minimise crime and antisocial behaviour.

Observations: Safety during the day was the most positive rated category by both businesses and visitors to the town in the surveys. Safety during the evening was less positive, with many more neutral responses received. Comments given seemed to relate the increase in poor responses to antisocial behaviour and large groups of people gathering. Safety in relation to the volume of traffic and lack of crossing points was also a considerable concern.

Key Safety Features:



Lighting appeared to be well maintained and distributed across the town



No central CCTV system in place

"Town Centre CCTV would be a great idea."

"The level of minor crime is escalating with vandalism on the increase yet we rarely see police officers walking through the town."

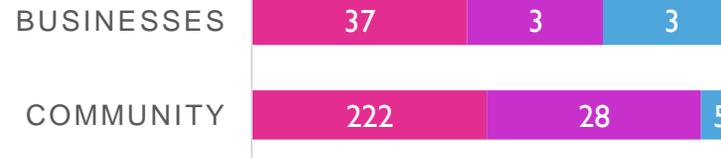
154 Incidences of crime reported
1st June 2020 – 1st June 2021
Police Scotland

FEELING SAFE



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SAFETY DURING THE DAY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Images (Clockwise from Top Left): Modern LED lighting; Pedestrianised area is well-lit; CCTV and lighting at the Railway Station.



"Policing of vehicles and speed. There just seems to be very little being done to keep spaces nice and safe."

"More evening police patrols at pub kicking out time."

"Improvement - feeling safe walking at night."

"Provide areas for youths rather than the streets or outside shops."

"Coming off bus opposite town hall then having to cross roads in that area is very dangerous for elderly."

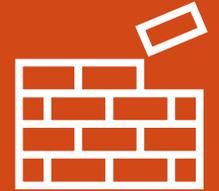
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SAFETY DURING THE EVENING?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Places that are well cared for can make us feel positive, while those that are not looked after properly can have the opposite effect. Proper maintenance arrangements allow people to feel supported and more positive about where they live.

CARE & MAINTENANCE



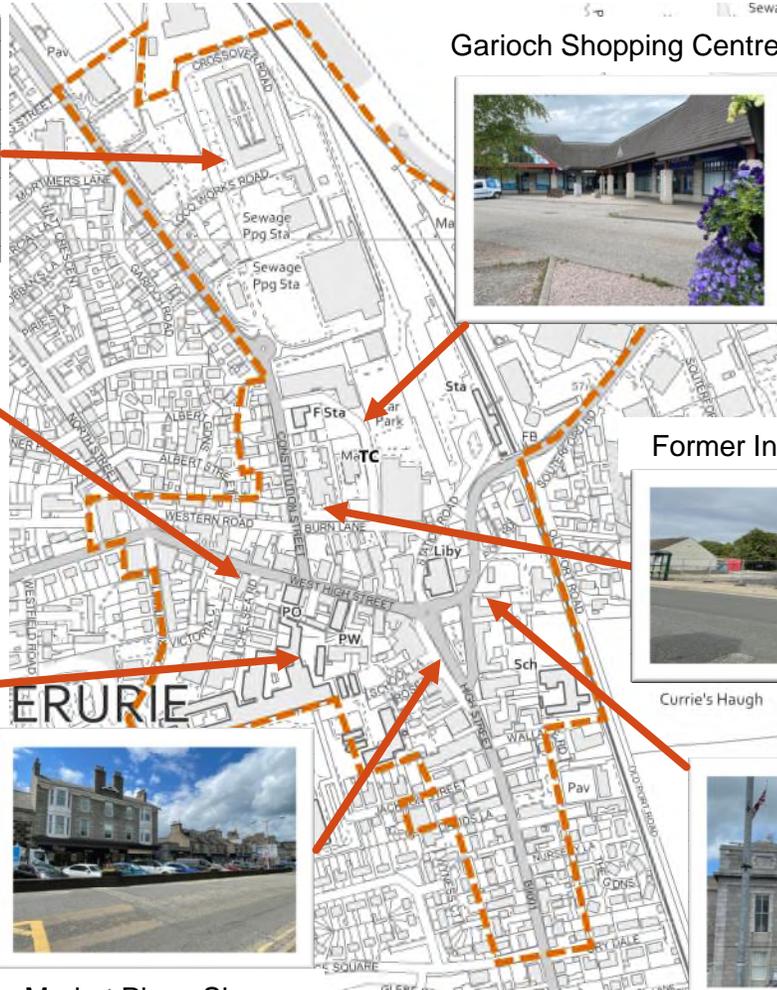
Garioch Heritage Centre



West Church



Old Academy Site



Garioch Shopping Centre



Former Inverurie Medical Centre Site



Currie's Haugh

Town Hall



Market Place Shops



Observations: Buildings and public spaces in Inverurie are generally well maintained and this was recognised in the surveys. However, the former Medical Centre, a large vacant site, having recently been cleared, is of concern to many survey respondents. The locations highlighted by the images give a flavour of the current town centre environment.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CARE & MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

| | | | |
|------------|-----|-----|----|
| BUSINESSES | 23 | 15 | 5 |
| COMMUNITY | 110 | 113 | 29 |

“If you are happening to look above the shops there is a lot of buildings that are obviously landlord owned which need a lot of work and suffer from no maintenance....”

“Overall buildings are in good repair, apart from old health centre and the co-op building.”

“The town centre needs a 'lift' and made more attractive; it needs to be cleaned up.”

“The town looks good, gardens well maintained. The only eye sore at the moment...is the old health centre.”

People's views about their local area should be heard. Having a voice in decision making and feeling able to make changes can help to build stronger communities and better places. Having a sense of control can make people feel positive about their lives.

INFLUENCE & SENSE OF CONTROL



Observations: Inverurie Town Centre is well represented with several different organisations working together to ensure the best outcomes for residents and businesses alike. Tools such as co-ordinated logos and websites have given Inverurie a distinct brand and contributed to a good awareness of the groups in the wider community.

| Town Centre Groups |  |  Inverurie Environmental Improvement (IEI) |  Inverurie Business Association (IBA) |  Inverurie Community Council |
|--------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Legal Status | Limited Company SC569806 | Registered Charity SC034357 | Constituted Group | Community Council (CC) |
| Membership | Businesses within Inverurie town centre; 111 members* | Volunteer committee and helpers. | Businesses from the Inverurie and District area. | The community; 13 Councillors* |
| Responsibilities | We Are INverurie BID aims to deliver a series of projects and services that will improve the trading environment in Inverurie to benefit business, their customers, clients and visitors. Key projects: Marketing and promotion; Pride in Inverurie; Accessibility; Business support, facilitation and advocacy; Environmental, safety and security; and Digital. Also responsible for Inverurie Events. | IEI aims to: promote horticulture in and around Inverurie for the benefit of the public by providing or encouraging the provision of displays of flowers, shrubs, trees or landscapes in places visible to the public and; to advance the education of the public concerning the natural environment through the development of environmental programs. | IBA aims to promote and help all businesses so all can play an effective role as the town continues to develop as a great place to live, work and do business for future generations. The IBA Committee: Act as advocates for local businesses, speaking directly to local and national Government; Offer regular opportunities for networking and learning events. | CC's are the most local tier of statutory representation in Scotland, bridging the gap between local authorities and communities. Key tasks: Representing CCs on other organisations; Campaigning on local issues; Conducting local surveys; Organising public meetings on major development proposals or the Local Development Plan; Statutory Body for public consultation on Planning and Licensing; Representing and providing a platform for public views. |
| Contact | Visit www.weareinverurie.co.uk to find out more about all these groups. | | | |

* Correct at time of survey.

"BID, Inverurie Events, Community Council all active in looking at the town centre and how best it serves the community in terms of visual attraction and event planning."

48% of survey respondents are aware of groups that support the town centre.

The word cloud (right) shows survey responses, with We Are Inverurie BID (71), the Environmental Improvement Group (39) and the Community Council (14) receiving the most.

Environmental Improvement Round Table
Events Acorn Centre Garioch Partnership Rotary
Community Centre We Are Inverurie BID
Civic Pride Vision 2030 Men's Shed Twinning
Business Association Community Council

Uryside Park Farmers Market

Walking and cycling are good for both our health and the environment. Good places can support and encourage people to walk and cycle by providing good quality routes and a pleasant and safe experience.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: GETTING AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Observations: The town centre is often busy with both vehicles and pedestrians and comments received through the surveys suggest that this is a significant concern for users of the town. A number of respondents suggested pedestrianising the area in front of the Town Hall to improve safety and allow space for events, along with a new crossing on Burn Lane.

"I love Inverurie but the town centre is generally quite congested with traffic and difficult to navigate."

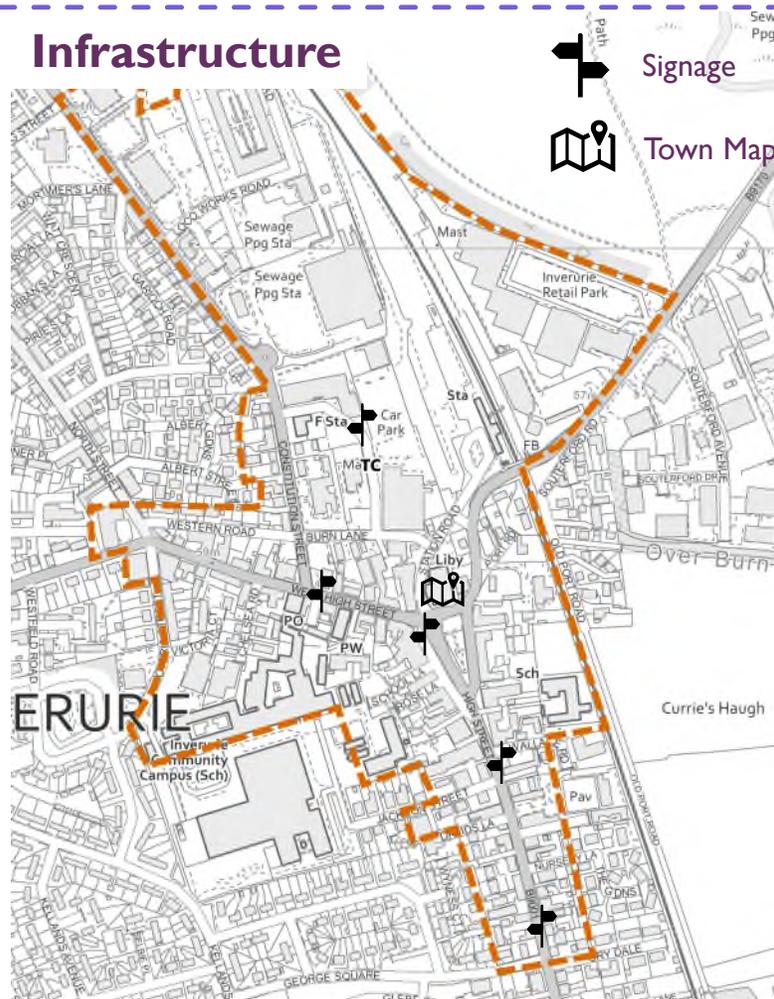
"It is very crowded and traffic can be a nightmare for pedestrians."

"Always a pleasant experience walking through town."

MOVING AROUND



Infrastructure

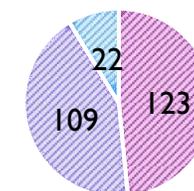


Images (Clockwise from Top Left): Fingerpost; Town noticeboard; Burn Lane car park signage.

"There are a number of problems for pedestrian access around the town centre, including narrow pavements, a lack of crossing opportunities and poor connections on desire lines such as Harlaw Road to Inverurie Train Station."

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SIGNAGE?

■ Good
■ Neutral
■ Poor



MOVING AROUND: CYCLING

Observations: Inverurie is defined as an [Integrated Travel Town](#) by the [Local Transport Strategy](#) and an active cycle route is being planned between Inverurie and Aberdeen. There are currently no cycle lanes in Inverurie Town Centre, however there are a variety of different types and locations of cycle parking. Survey responses show that most do not have a concern with cycle parking, however there were twice as many poor ratings as good, so this suggests that for those who do cycle in the town that they find the experience unsatisfactory.

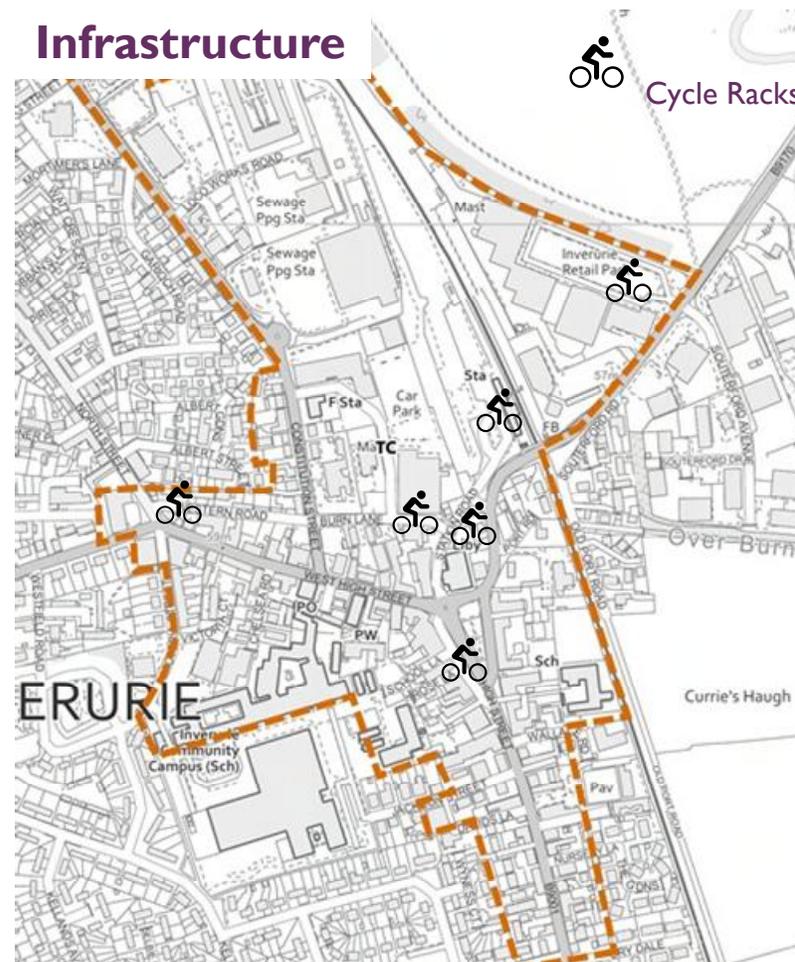
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CYCLE PARKING?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

| | | | |
|------------|----|-----|----|
| BUSINESSES | 11 | 22 | 9 |
| COMMUNITY | 24 | 158 | 45 |

"I often use the bike lane from Kintore but find it very difficult and dangerous to navigate once I reach Port Elphinstone - back on the road, no lanes, very little bike racks since the one at the old academy has gone."

Infrastructure



Images (Left to Right): Covered cycle racks at Station Road car park; Freestanding racks at Market Place car park.

"Would love to see better cycling infrastructure, larger than a single file lane (do not feel comfortable at the moment). Even more bicycle lock areas to encourage less car use."

"A safe cycle route into town would prevent me from having to take the car."

"Lack of green spaces and pedestrian / cycle routes to link them and other facilities / towns (painting lines on an existing road doesn't cut it)."

MOVING AROUND: FOOTFALL SURVEY

Footfall is a measure of the vitality of the town centre and can be directly linked to economic activity.

Pedestrian counts were undertaken on Wednesday 1st and Saturday 18th September for a duration of 15 minutes, four times a day, in four locations.

The pedestrian count findings showed the highest footfall count was recorded at Greggs on Saturday afternoon (309 people). It was also the busiest count point in general over the course of the footfall survey.

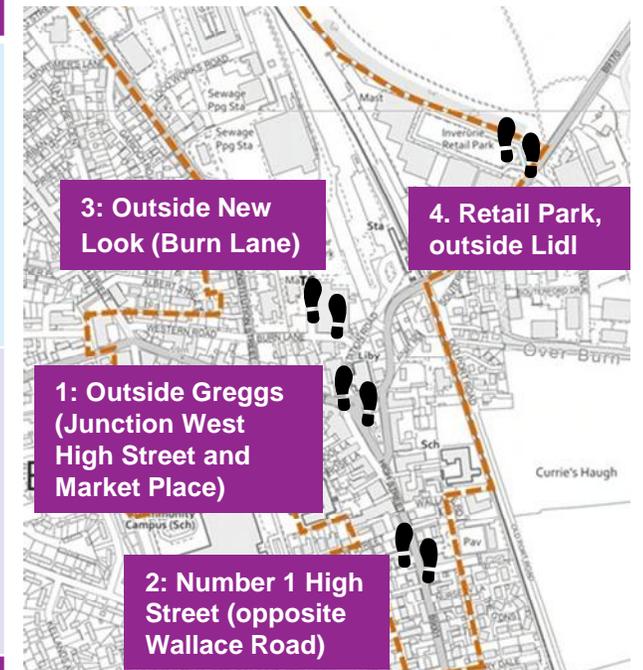
| Day | Time | Location 1 | Location 2 | Location 3 | Location 4 | Hourly Total | Overall Total |
|---|-------|-------------|------------|------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Wednesday  | 09:30 | 98 | 28 | 60 | 42 | 228 | 1361 |
| | 11:30 | 211 | 96 | 133 | 68 | 508 | |
| | 14:30 | 162 | 51 | 161 | 71 | 445 | |
| | 18:00 | 60 | 37 | 41 | 42 | 180 | |
| Saturday  | 09:30 | 144 | 66 | 76 | 154* | 440 | 2099 |
| | 11:30 | 242 | 149 | 195 | 79 | 665 | |
| | 14:30 | 309 | 153 | 208 | 97 | 767 | |
| | 18:00 | 65 | 57 | 65 | 40 | 227 | |
| Totals | | 1291 | 637 | 939 | 593 (927) ** | 3460 | |

HEADLINES

Busiest Location: Outside Greggs
Busiest Time: 14:30
Busiest Day: Saturday

Quietest Location: Retail Park
Quietest Time: 18:00
Quietest Day: Wednesday

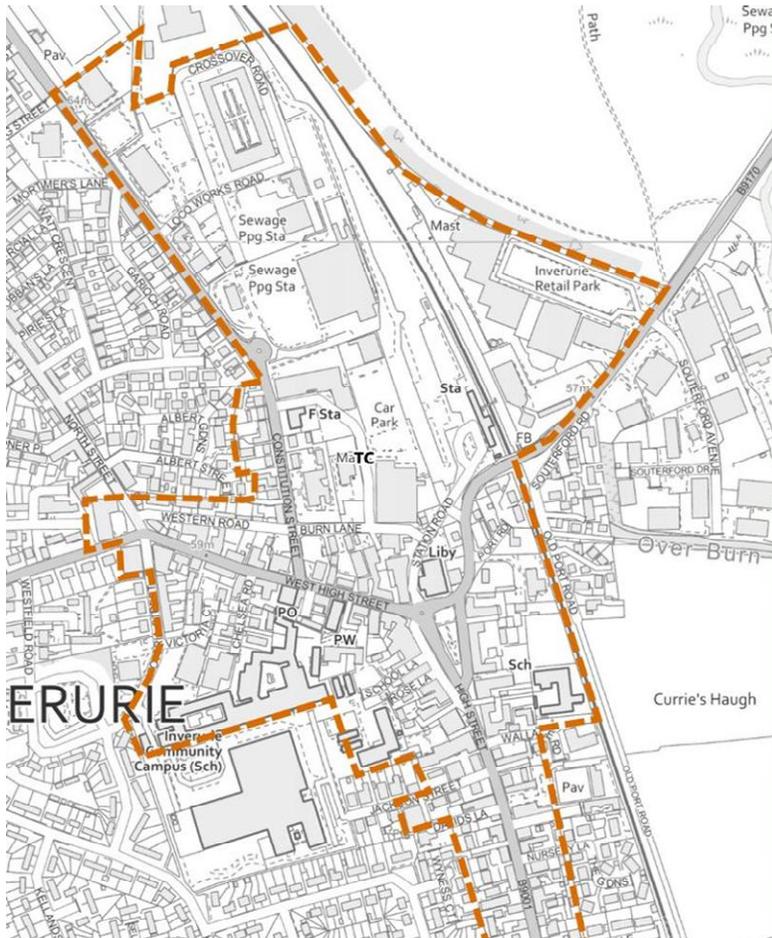
Count Locations



* Park Run was taking place at this time and the figure includes 71 participants.

** An additional **144** people on Wednesday and **190** on Saturday visited Lidl during the survey periods, who arrived and left the Retail Park by car, giving a total of 927 visitors.

MOVING AROUND: ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT



In a new approach to undertaking accessibility audits and in partnership with Community Learning and Development, five participants were recruited from the local community to undertake a survey to identify the effect of roads on people who walk and to identify barriers to walking and enhance opportunities to improve connectivity, attractiveness and safety.

The group was mixed with adults with buggies, accompanied by primary and secondary age children, young people aged 16-25 and adults with limited English.

Volunteers reviewed the following elements, and their own comments and observations are recorded on the following pages:

- Footway surfaces and obstructions;
- Facilities and signage;
- Maintenance and enforcement;
- Personal security;
- Crossing points;
- Access to buildings.

The survey took place on Wednesday 21st July 14:00 – 17:00. The weather was warm and sunny.

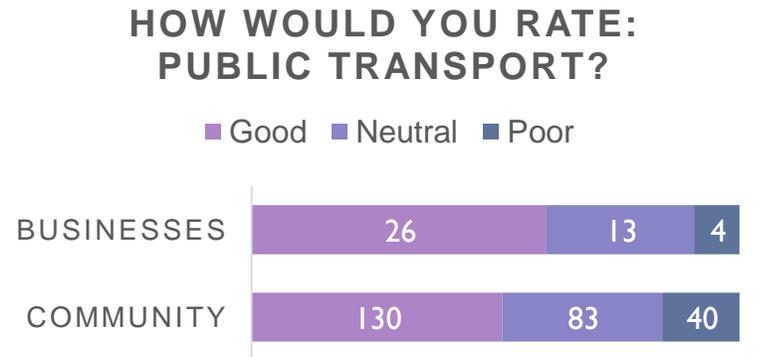
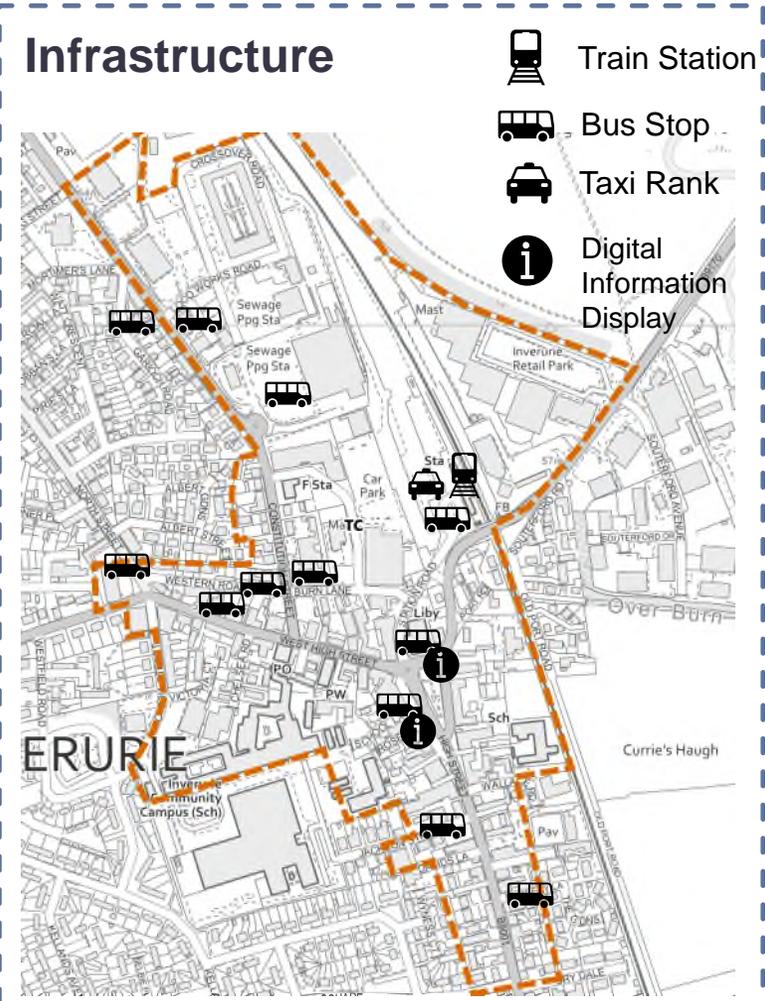
Access to an affordable, reliable and well-connected public transport service is important for all communities. Good public transport encourages people to get around in ways that are better for the environment.

Observations: Inverurie is well served with both bus and rail links to Aberdeen, Inverness and several other towns and villages. There are a number of bus stops distributed across the town centre with real time information provided at two of these. Overall, survey respondents seemed happy with public transport. However there were recurring comments in relation to the need for a public transport hub and the subsequent removal of the bus stops from outside the Town Hall to open up the space for other uses.



Images (Clockwise from Top Left): The main bus stop at Inverurie Town Hall; Inverurie Train Station; Real Time Digital Display.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT



“Road links and train service very good.”

“I have to drive in as there are no trains to my village and buses are so poorly timed there is no time to shop and get a return journey.”

“The Kintore to Inverurie bus link is poor which although I don’t use my mum relies on.”

“There is a long term community aspiration for a public transport hub (at the train station).”

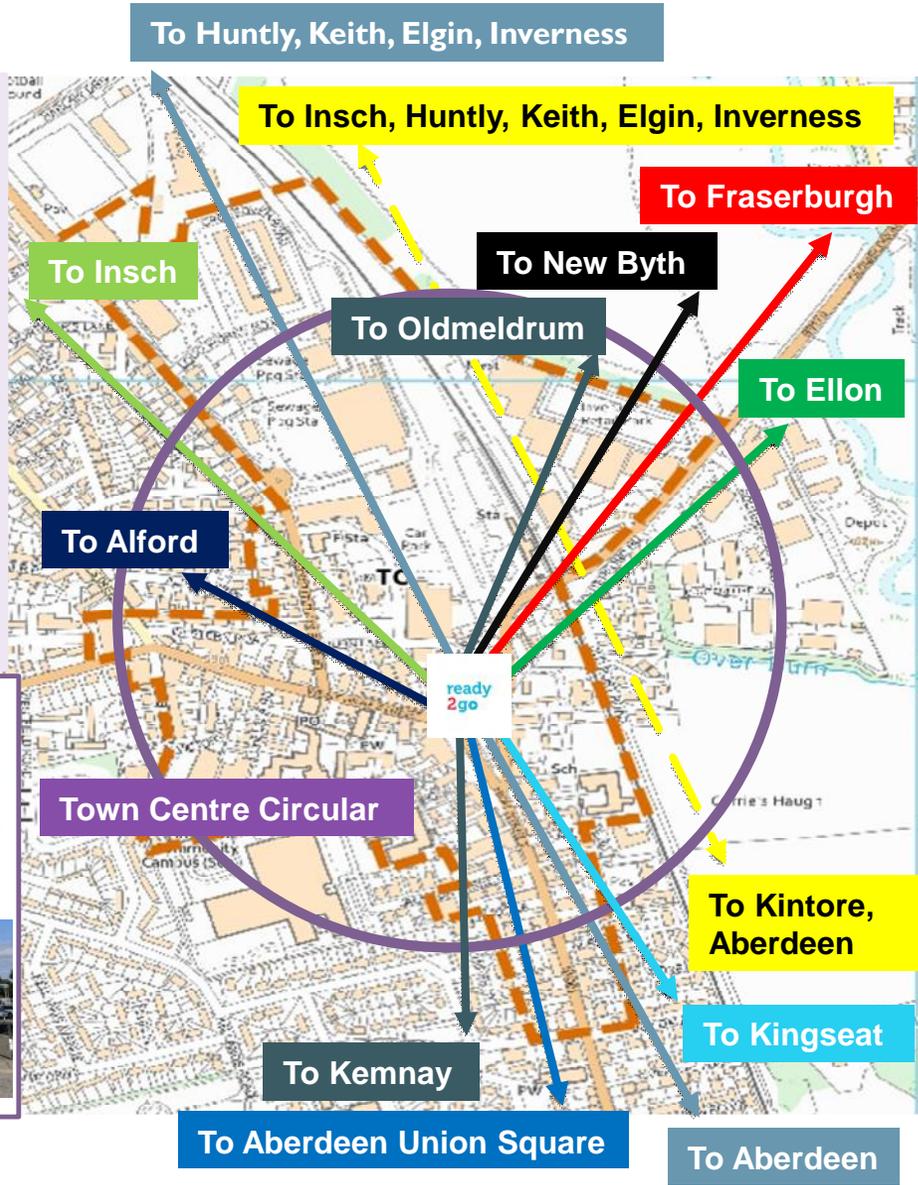
“Getting rid of the bus stops and car park here (town hall) would make this a really nice, designated public space where events could be hosted.”

PUBLIC TRANSPORT ROUTES

Key:

- Railway
- Bus Route 49
- Bus Route 37
- Bus Route 10
- Bus Route 452
- Bus Route 41
- Bus Route 421
- Bus Route 248
- Bus Route 240
- Bus Route 403
- Bus Route 22

On Demand Bus Service:
 Mon-Fri
 06:30 - 19:30
 Sat 07:30 - 18:30
 From £1.50



| Route* | Frequency (per week day) | Fastest Journey Time | Earliest Travel Time | Latest Travel Time | Cost Single Standard Ticket |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Train to Aberdeen | 35 | 22mins | 06:37 | 23:18 | £6.00 |
| Train to Inverness | 11 | 1hr 45mins | 06:42 | 22:20 | £26.80 |
| Bus to Aberdeen (10) | 23 | 46mins | 06:23 | 22:51 | £5.50 |
| Bus to Huntly (10) | 19 | 42mins | 07:54 | 23:15 | £7.50 |
| Bus to Aberdeen Union Square (37) | 11 | 53mins | 05:50 | 20:51 | £5.50 |
| Bus to Insch (41) | 13 | 22mins | 09:45 | 18:42 | £4.00 |
| Bus to Fraserburgh (452) | 1 (Tues only) | 1hr 21mins | 12:23 | N/a | £4.00 |
| Bus to Ellon (49) | 6 | 32mins | 08:05 | 17:25 | £5.50 |
| Bus to Alford (421) | 6 | 32mins | 06:00 | 17:38 | - |
| Bus to New Byth (248) | 1 (Thur only) | 1hr 2mins | 12:30 | N/a | - |
| Bus to Oldmeldrum (240) | 9 | 18mins | 09:39 | 14:59 | - |
| Bus to Kemnay (240) | 8 | 15mins | 09:36 | 14:16 | - |
| Bus to Kingseat (403) | 1 (Tues only) | 33mins | 12:00 | N/a | £3.00 |
| Town Centre Circular, Town Hall stop (22) | 10 | 22mins | 09:30 | 17:15 | £1.50 |

* Correct at time of survey

TRAFFIC & PARKING

TRAFFIC



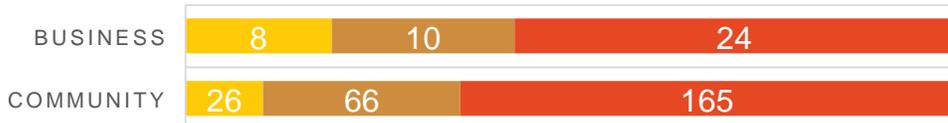
Too much traffic can cause problems for people who live in, work in, or visit an area. Traffic and parking arrangements that allow people to move around safely can help people to get the most out of a place.

Observations: The number of comments relating to traffic within the town centre was one of the most commented topics within the community survey. It was also the lowest ranked topic in both of the community and business survey. The majority of comments received were in relation to concerns about there being too much traffic within the town centre, poor traffic flow and the need for better traffic management/measures to be put into place. Although the majority of comments received noted concerns about the town centre congestion/ traffic flow it is worth noting that the air quality within the town centre is good as per the 2020 Air Quality Annual Progress Report but this will continue to be monitored.

The Spaces for People one way system installed through the COVID-19 pandemic was also noted by a number of respondents as being a positive in terms of helping with the flow of traffic. 73% of the community noted within the survey that they travelled less than 5 miles to get to the town centre but it was also noted through the survey that 66% generally used their car to access the town centre.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: TRAFFIC FLOW?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



“Reduced through traffic flow and perhaps the introduction of a one way system.”

“Make it as traffic free as possible.”

“Some means of reducing traffic, very congested, noisy and fummy.”

“Reduce the traffic congestion.”

“Traffic can often be at a standstill so an improvement to that would help.”

“Sort out the traffic flow, the town centre is dominated by cars.”

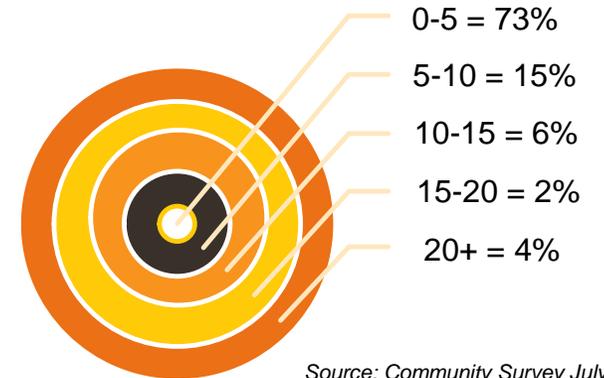
“One way system installed during lockdown was very good.”

“Need traffic calming measures.”

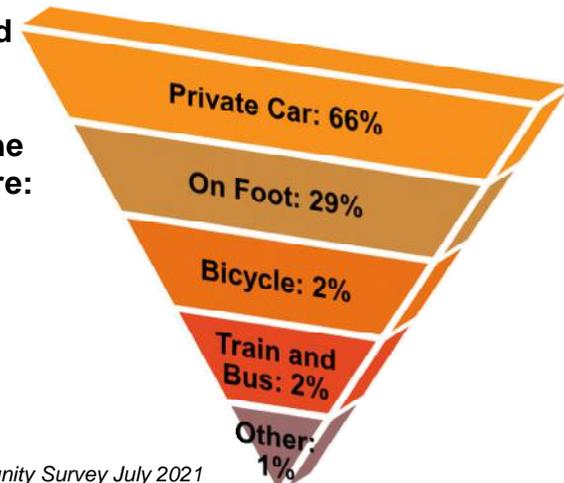
“Traffic management needs to be looked at.”

“More traffic free areas.”

Distance Travelled to Use the Town Centre (Miles)



How would you generally travel to the town centre:



TRAFFIC & PARKING

CAR PARKING AFFORDABILITY

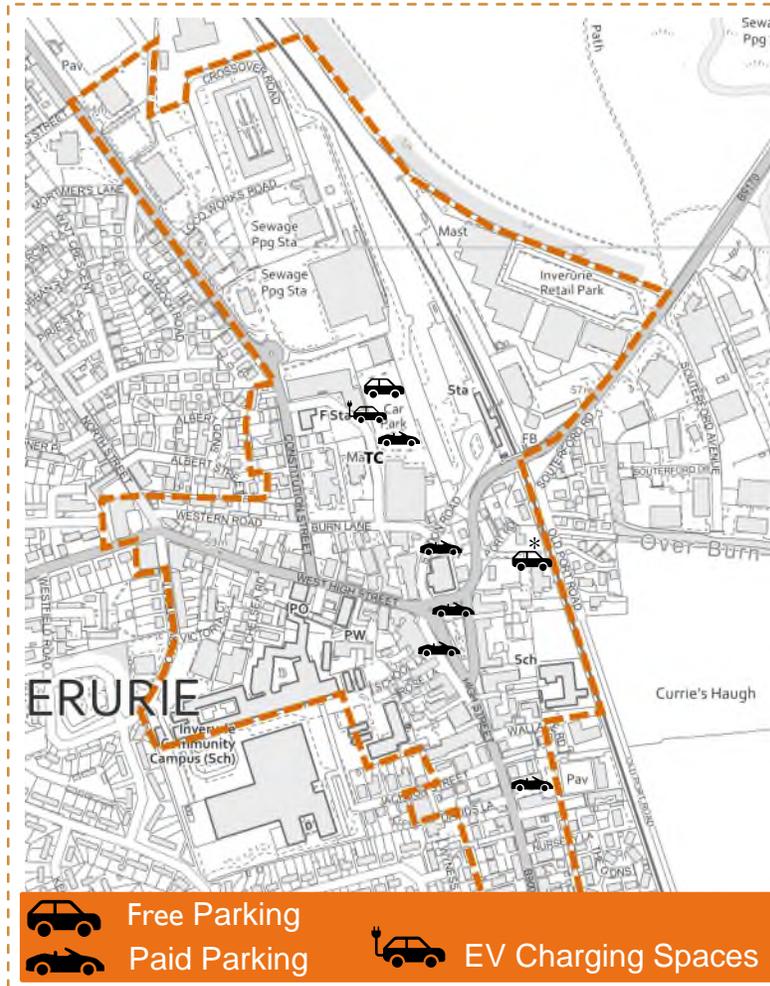
Parking Costs

£0.50

Average hourly rate
July 2021



Images: (Top Left and Clockwise): Burn Lane Car Park, Market Place Car Park and The Square Car Park.



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKING AFFORDABILITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

| | | | |
|-----------|----|-----|----|
| BUSINESS | 7 | 18 | 18 |
| COMMUNITY | 71 | 112 | 74 |

- “Provide more free parking for residents.”*
- “Parking charges should be removed – all parking free.”*
- “The 30 minute free parking should be reinstated.”*
- “Introduce a one ticket that covers all town centre car parks.”*
- “Need more affordable parking.”*
- “Parking charges discourages usage of the town centre.”*
- “Parking charges are reasonable.”*

TRAFFIC & PARKING

CAR PARKING AVAILABILITY

“Provide more disabled parking spaces.”

“More parking is required in the town centre.”

“Better parking facilities.”

“More parking is required in the centre for people who have limited mobility.”

“More parking required in the town centre to encourage people to use the town centre rather than the retail park.”

“More parking required – could maybe use the site of the old medical centre for additional parking.”

“Not enough parking as most people drive into the town centre.”

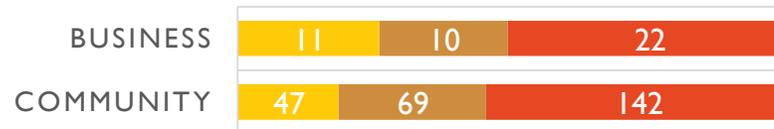
“Car parking is fairly limited.”

“Parking outside of shops is a problem and restricts the traffic flow around the town centre.”

“Need more car parking – number of housing has increased but car parking has remained.”

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKING AVAILABILITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Observations: Parking availability was one of the worst rated topics within both the visitor and business surveys. Parking affordability was slightly better ranked than the availability. Both topics were heavily commented on through the surveys with most of the comments of a negative nature.

The common theme of the parking affordability was the strong desire for the return of the free 30 minutes of parking, more free spaces (rather than just in Burn Lane) and also the idea of a town centre parking ticket was noted a number of times rather than having to pay per car park. Within the comments on the availability there was common theme was that there wasn't enough parking within the town centre. This was noted on several occasions by respondents where a recommendation was made by them that the former medical centre site could form more parking.

Spaces

175* No. of Free Spaces

194 No. of Paid Spaces

24 No. of Disabled Spaces

10 No. of EV Charging Spaces

* 15 free spaces – weekends only

TRAFFIC & PARKING

EV CHARGING POINTS

EV Charging Points

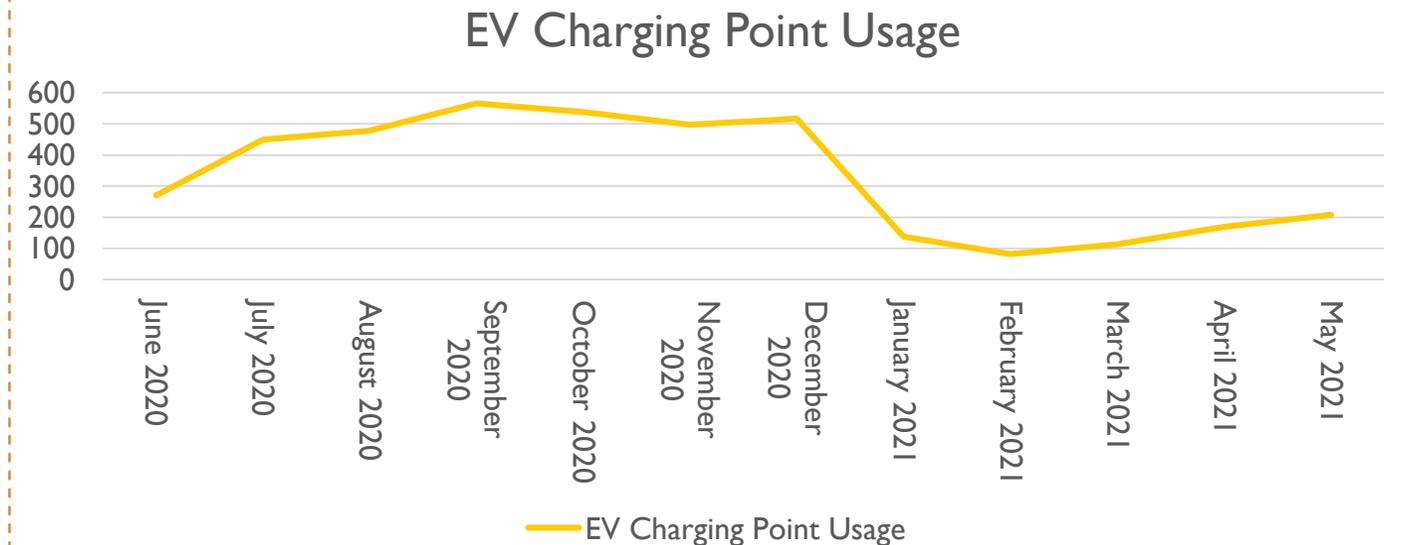
4 No. of 50kW charging spaces

2 No. of 22kW charging spaces

4 No. of 7kW charging spaces

Observations: There are ten spaces for electric vehicles in the town centre and are all located within the Burn Lane Car Park. At time of the site visit none of the spaces were in use but looking at usage data since their installation the spaces are used on a regular basis. No comments, positive or negative, were received in relation to the EV charging points through the visitor survey.

Images (Both): Burn Lane Car Park.



Observations: The COVID-19 pandemic will have had an impact on this with Scotland being in lockdown for the first quarter of 2021.



EV Charging Points



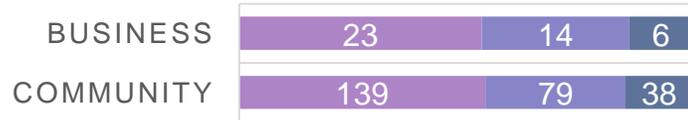
September 2020

Highest monthly usage of the charging points in Burn Lane

Buildings, landmarks, greenery, views and natural landscape can all help to create an attractive, distinctive place that people enjoy. These features can also help people to find their way around.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: ATTRACTIVENESS OF TOWN?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Observations: The general appearance and condition of the town centre is very high. There was no presence of litter lying around which could be due to the number of bins provided in the area. Choice was also provided to visitors with a distribution of recycling bins throughout. The shops were well kept and it was evident that maintenance had been recently undertaken on a number of shop fronts which made the shops feel bright and welcoming.

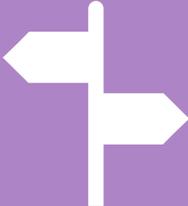
“Make town centre more attractive.”

“The town is shabby and this includes the shops.”

“Looking good, well maintained.”

STREETS & SPACES

ATTRACTIVENESS OF TOWN CENTRE



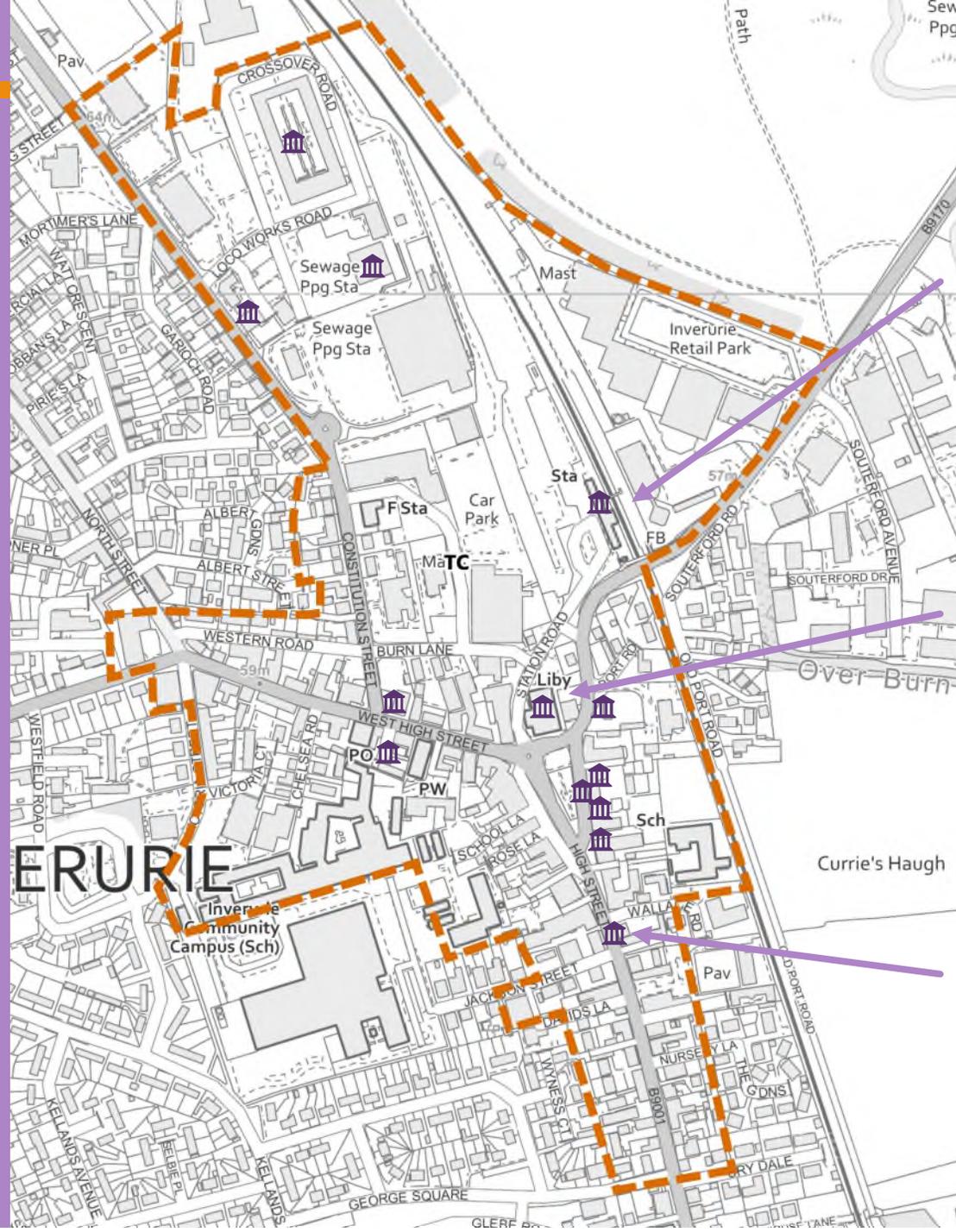
| | Notes | Image |
|--|---|---|
|  | Two locations of graffiti were noted on the site survey. These were on the bridge linking to the Train Station and on the Public Toilets. It was not significant enough to distract from the attractiveness overall of the town centre. | N/A |
|  | The area around the War Memorial adds to the overall attractiveness of the town centre as it provides an area of open space for residents to use within the town centre. |  |
|  | The presence of the flower planters throughout the town centre brightened up the streets and made for an attractive town centre. There was also a number of hanging baskets located on lampposts and shops which again added to the overall feeling within the town centre. |   |

STREETS & SPACES: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

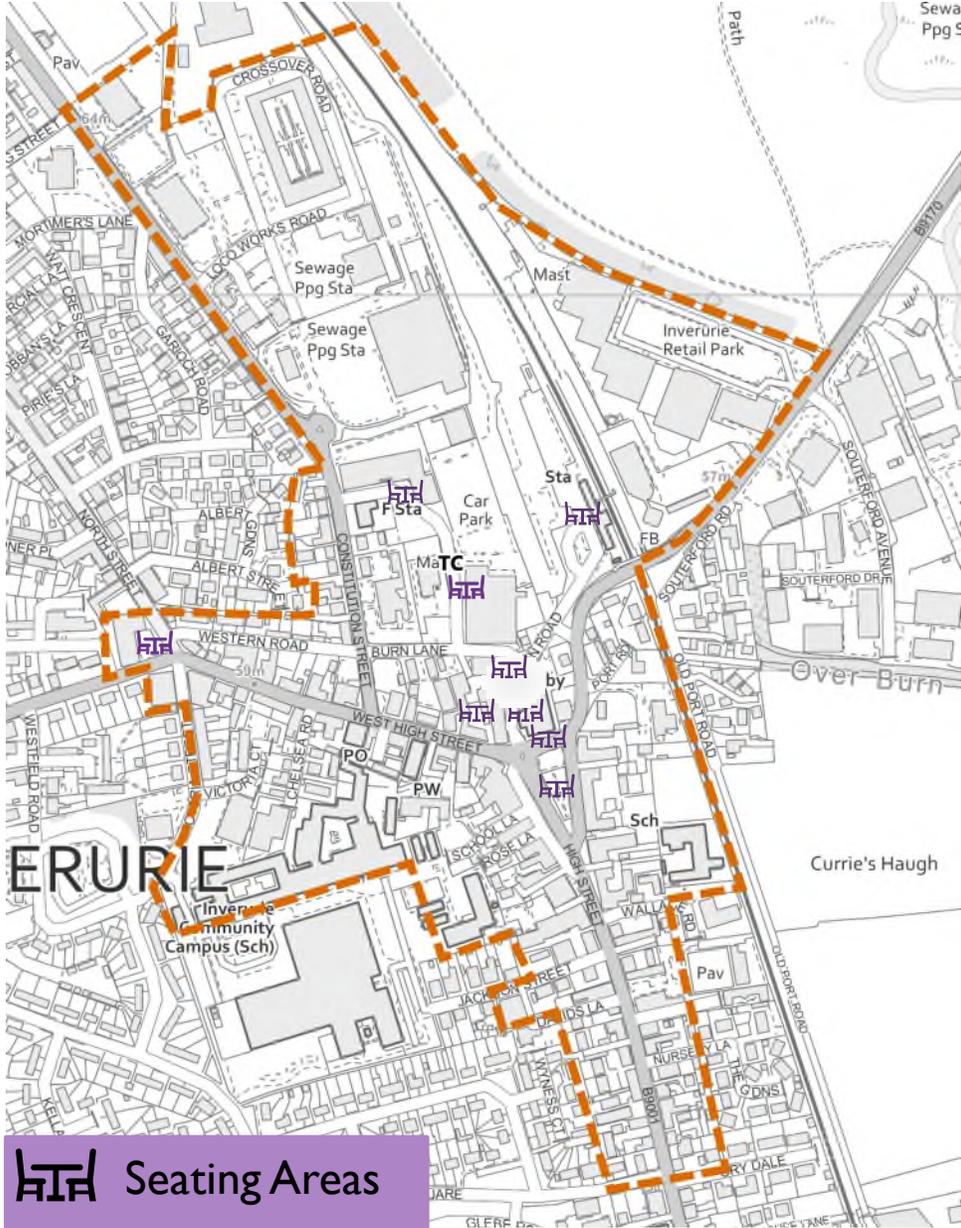
Observations: There are 13 listed buildings within Inverurie Town Centre. Of these 13, 8 are Category B Listed and 5 are Category C listed.

Overall the condition of the majority of the listed buildings in the town centre was good and 12 of the buildings were in active usage.

One of the buildings, the former Great North of Scotland Locomotive Works is currently on the Buildings at Risk register. However, this building does form part of a wider regeneration project happening within the site. The building is currently in poor condition and any work to this building will see a real improvement to the northern section of the town centre.



Images (Top to Bottom): Inverurie Railway Station; Inverurie Town Hall and 1 High Street.



HTA Seating Areas

STREETS & SPACES: SEATING

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SEATING/ AREAS TO CONGREGATE

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

| | | | |
|-----------|----|----|-----|
| BUSINESS | 11 | 10 | 22 |
| COMMUNITY | 30 | 83 | 142 |



Image: Memorial Garden.

“More seating areas.”

“Covered outdoor seating would be good.”

“Low provision of benches and seating areas.”

“More seating areas for businesses/ cafes to expand into.”

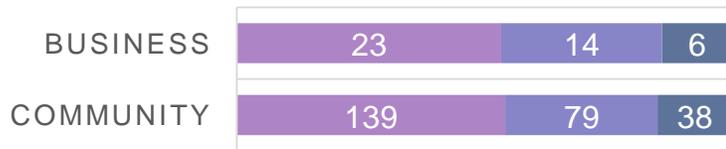
Observations: Concerns over a lack of seating was noted strongly throughout the community survey and the desire for more seating was noted. Seating/ areas to congregate was ranked as the third lowest of all the topics within both the community and business surveys.

The seating within the Memorial Garden was very well used at all times of the day. However, the seating within the pedestrianised area at Burn Lane and Station Road were underutilised. The available seats within the town centre were all in good condition with a mixture of styles throughout. One of the seats within the Memorial Area is of note as not only is it a seat but also provides some public art.

STREETS & SPACES: PAVEMENTS

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PAVEMENT CLEANLINESS?

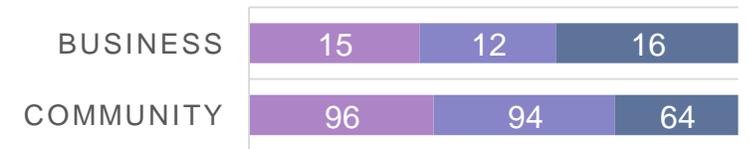
■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Observations: The scoring through the survey for both quality and cleanliness of pavements both scored well through the surveys with around 80% of people either noting them as good or neutral. However, the comments noted in response to these were very negative in relation to the pavements needing upgraded and levelled. The images below show pavements throughout the town centre with noticeable cracks and levelling issues apparent.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PAVEMENT QUALITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



“Pavements need to be wiped and more space given to pedestrians and cyclists.”

“Main issue relates to the cleanliness of the pavements.”

“Pavements are not attractive and need to be replaced.”

“The pavements are not maintained and are quite dirty.”



“Pavements are uneven, therefore unsafe.”

“Pavements need replaced.”

“Some pavements are in need of levelling.”

“Pavements are poor quality.”

“Quality of pavements is poor for wheelchair users.”

“Pavements are narrow in places.”

Observations: There is one major derelict site identified within the Vacant and Derelict Land Audit within Inverurie Town Centre which is the former Medical Centre. The site was cleared in September 2021. There was a large number of comments received through the Community Survey relating to this site in particular to it being called an eyesore and also the different uses that residents would like to see on the site.

There are other areas of vacant sites within the town centre including Market Place Primary School but these are not currently noted within the Vacant and Derelict Land Survey which is why they are not included with the Town Centre Health Check at this time.

“More parking, maybe use the space where the old medical centre is.”

“Use for a tree lined car park.”

“Old Health Centre needs sorted.”

“Turn the old Inverurie Health Centre site into a green, communal space.”

“The old health centre needs demolished as it is putting the town centre area to shame.”

“The old health centre is an eye sore.”

STREETS & SPACES: VACANT & DERELICT SITES (VACANT AND DERELICT LAND SURVEY 2019)

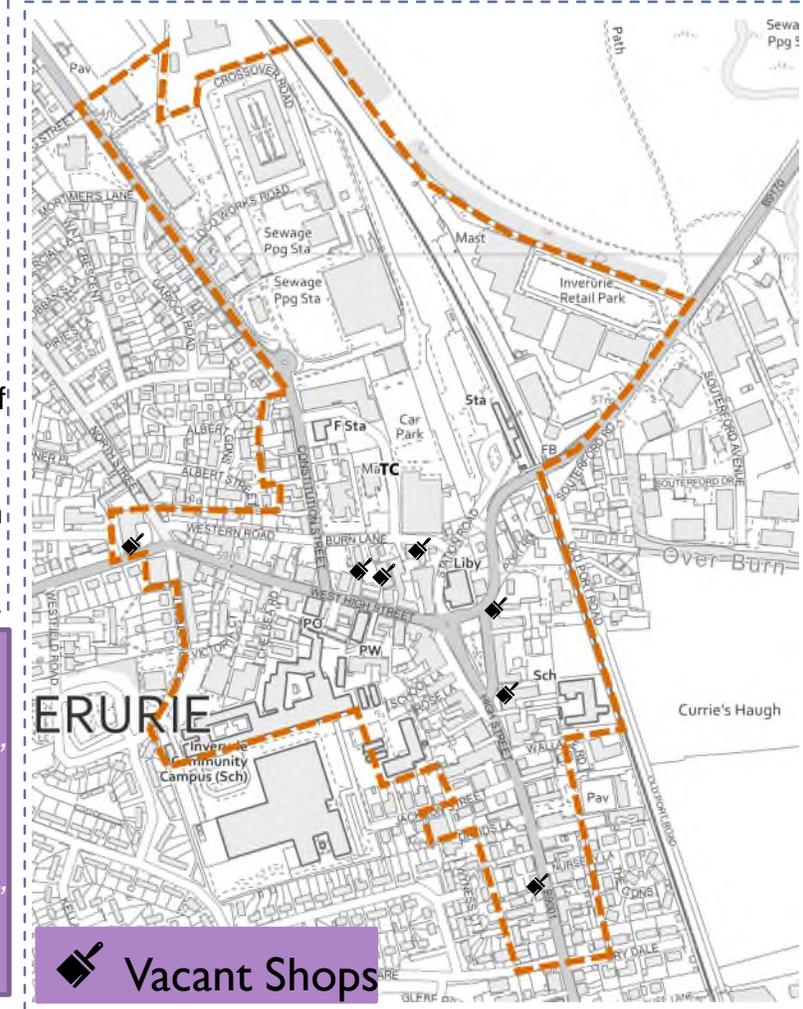


Images: Former Medical Centre Site,
Constitution Street.



STREETS & SPACES: VACANT RETAIL UNITS

Observations: The number of vacant units within the town centre is low with a 5.2% vacancy rate which is significantly lower than the Scottish average at the time of the survey, Q3 2021, which is 15% (Scottish Retail Consortium and Local Data Company). The vacant units are mostly in good condition and do not adversely impact on the overall appearance of the town centre. The level of vacancy was a comment that was noted strongly through the visitor survey with a mix of views. However, most noted that there was a low level of vacancy. It is understood that half of the units have got interest in them with them either being under offer or planning applications submitted.



Vacant Retail Units

8 Vacant Units in the town centre

5.2% Vacancy Rate at time of survey

Images (Top Left and Clockwise): 2 properties on Market Place, Pedestrianised Area off of Burn Lane, High Street and Burn Lane.

"Unlike many towns there are few empty shops which give it a vibrant, welcoming feel."

"There are so many shops closed."

"Very few empty properties."

"Lots of different shops, although a few starting to close now."

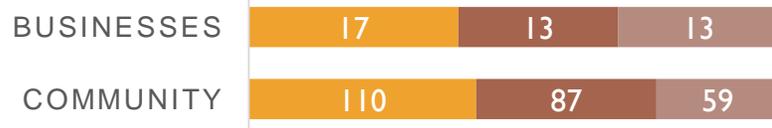
"General feeling of vibrancy and not too many empty retail units."

Natural space includes parks and woodlands, fields, streams and rivers, green space alongside paths and roads, and tree-lined streets. These can be good for wildlife, improve air quality and benefit our health and wellbeing.

Observations: There is little in the way of public open space within the town centre, and this was recognised in the surveys. It was one of the bottom five aspects of the town in the business survey and commented on by many across both surveys, with several suggesting the use of the old Medical Centre site as a prospect to increase green space. However, opportunities are taken to green the space where possible, with planters, hanging baskets verges and the memorial area all being well maintained and looking attractive.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKS & GREEN SPACES?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



“The green space at the war memorial is the only area of its type in the town centre.”

“Wildflowers, e.g. in green spaces and on bus stops. Community growing... e.g. in green spaces.”

“Turning the old Inverurie Health Centre site into a green, communal space.”

NATURAL SPACE



Planters located at key junctions



Pedestrianised area could be improved with enhanced landscaping



The memorial area is the main green space in the heart of the town centre



Harlaw Road: Wide tree-lined verges



Seating area adjacent to public toilets. Some planting softens the space



Riverside Walks 400 Yards: Fingerposts direct people to areas of green space outwith the town centre



Roadside planting provides a green boundary between cars and pedestrians

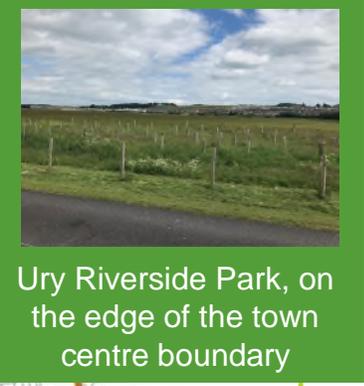
Inverurie Environmental Improvement, a registered charity, is very active in the town centre, winning a Keep Scotland Beautiful award in 2020 in recognition of their efforts alongside other groups in the town.

PLAY & RECREATION



Good places encourage children to play and allow adults to enjoy leisure and sporting activities. Opportunities for play and recreation can improve the quality of our lives and our health.

Observations: Inverurie has few play and recreation sites within the town centre itself, and this is reflected in the survey responses. Comments focused on a lack of opportunities for young people. However, there are several leisure sites within one mile from the Town Hall. An illustrative map of walking routes in the area can be seen below (for more detail visit: inverurie-walking.pdf (aberdeenshire.gov.uk))



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: OTHER ATTRACTIONS*?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

| | | | |
|------------|----|-----|----|
| BUSINESSES | 8 | 21 | 12 |
| COMMUNITY | 39 | 132 | 78 |

*Includes leisure, recreation and play facilities.

"I'd like to see more sports facilities to engage the community such as free and accessible tennis / basketball courts."

"Perhaps music in summer by the town hall."

"Soft play, Cinema, activities to get kids off the streets."

"All of the basic services are in place - the offering could be further improved by development of new leisure options within the town centre, (Kellands Park and Ury Riverside Park) and making better use of existing built assets such as the Garioch Heritage Centre as a community hub for a wider range of activities."

Facilities and amenities are the things that we need to live and enjoy life. This can include shops, schools, nurseries, libraries, GP surgeries and places to eat, drink and meet friends. Access to facilities and amenities is important to support healthy, fulfilling lives.

FACILITIES & AMENITIES

RETAILER REPRESENTATION

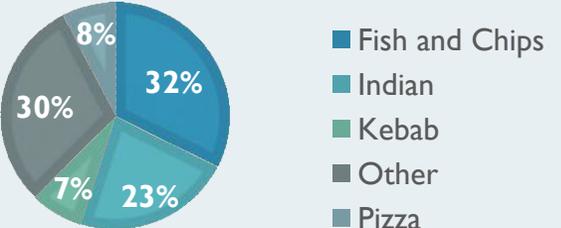


| Use Class Order Classification The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997 | Number of Units within Use Class | Distribution of Units in Use class |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| <p>Class 1: Shops (Retail sale of goods other than hot food, post office; sale of tickets; travel agency; sale of cold food for consumption off the premises; hairdressing; direction of funerals; the display of goods for sale; hiring out of domestic or personal goods or articles; launderette or dry cleaners; reception of goods to be washed, cleaned or repaired; where the sale, display or service is principally to visiting members of the public)</p> | 82 units | <p>CLASS 1: SHOPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Charity ■ Clothes & Footwear ■ Entertainment ■ Florists ■ Food & Drink ■ Hairdresser & Barber ■ Home & Garden ■ Other |
| <p>Class 2: Financial, Professional and other services (Use for the provision of - financial services; professional services; or any other services (including use as a betting office) e.g. offices of accountants, dentists, doctors, solicitors, beauticians, estate agents)</p> | 26 units | <p>CLASS 2: FINANCIAL, PROFESSIONAL & OTHER SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Banks ■ Accountants, Solicitors, Estate Agents ■ Beauticians ■ Betting Office ■ Dentists ■ Other |



Images (Top to Bottom): Market Place, Inverurie Retail Park.

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: RETAILER REPRESENTATION

| Use Class Order Classification The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997 | Number of Units within Use Class | Distribution of Units in Use class |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Class 3: Food and Drink (The sale of food or drink for consumption on the premises. e.g. cafes, restaurants, snack bars.) | 8 units | CLASS 3: FOOD AND DRINK  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Café ■ Restaurant |
| Sui Generis (For the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises. e.g. pizza shops, takeaways, kebab shops, fish and chip shops) | 11 units | SUI GENERIS - HOT FOOT TAKEAWAY  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fish and Chips ■ Indian ■ Kebab ■ Other ■ Pizza |
| Sui Generis (Use as a Public House) | 4 units | 4 Public Houses |



Images (Top to Bottom): Both West High Street.

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: RETAILER REPRESENTATION

Retailer Representation

45% of businesses in the town centre are independent retailers

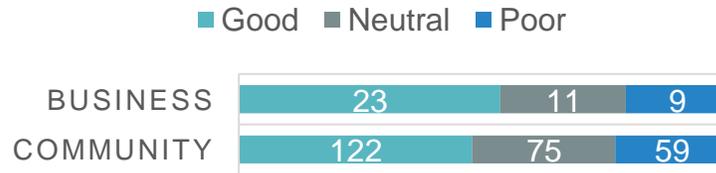
49.8% of businesses in the town centre are multiple retailers *

*have multiple stores operating under one brand name and have common ownership.

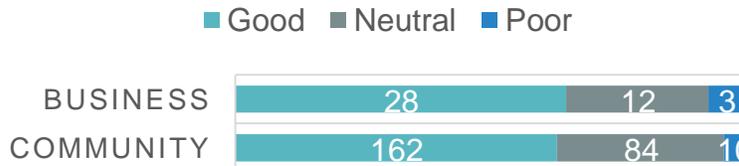
6 No. of Charity Shops

76% of visitors to Inverurie Town Centre agree that it offers all services expected (retail, café, pubs etc).

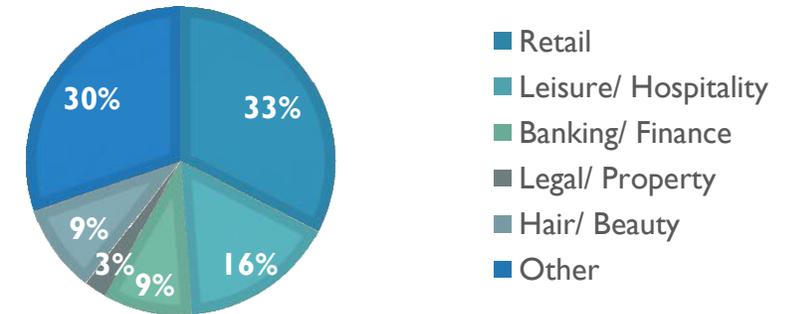
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VARIETY OF SHOPS?



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: QUALITY OF SHOPS?



BUSINESS SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENT USES



Observations: Inverurie has a strong retail focus with a great mix of independent and multiple retailers and within each Use Class provides a range of shops. Through the community survey it was evident from the comments received that there was concerns noted about the variety of shops particularly in relation to clothing shops. The quality of shops was also scored well in both of the surveys undertaken.

“Great businesses in Inverurie.”

“There isn’t a lot to choose from quality wise. Too many charity/ vape shops.”

“Serious lack of clothing retailers - poor choice.”

“Lack of choice and variety.”

“There are many services to choose from offering a variety of prices and quality.”

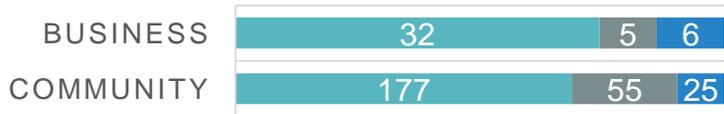
“A good mix of branded and independent options.”

“More variety of shops would be good.”

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: CAFE AND RESTAURANTS

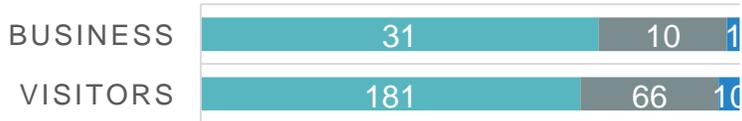
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CAFE/ RESTAURANT CHOICE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CAFE/ RESTAURANT QUALITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



“More cafes.”

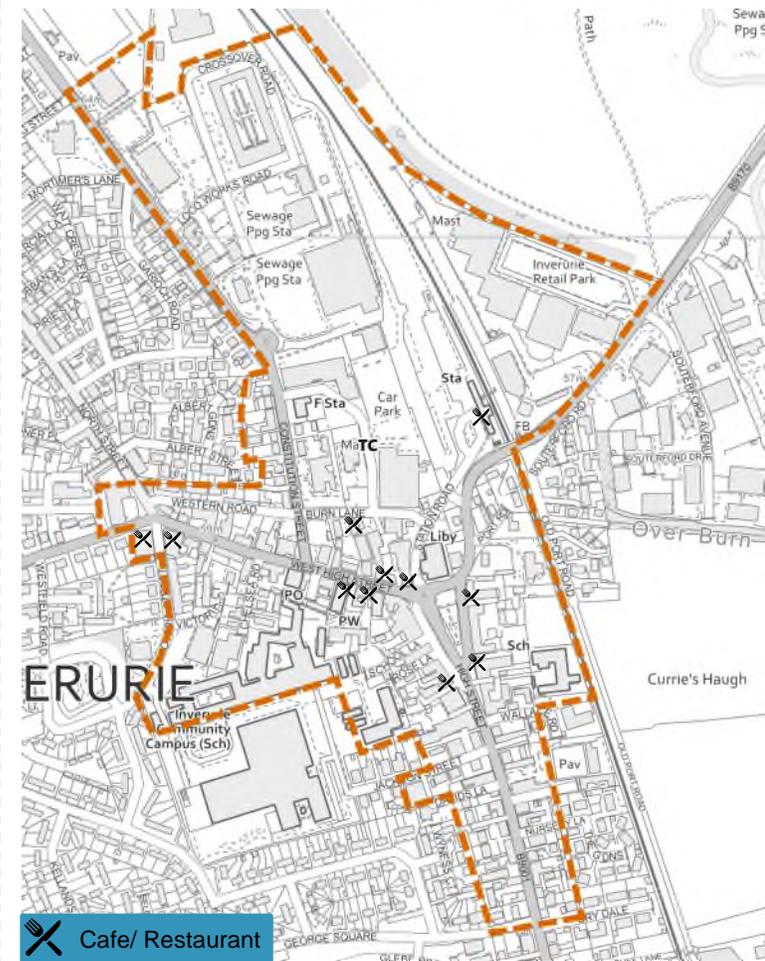
“Outdoor covered seating areas, allow cafes etc ability to use road area for this.”

“Make part of the the centre pedestrianised with more cafes/restaurants having outside space.”

“There is only one cafe where you can sit outside.”

“Good variety of cafes and restaurants.”

“Lack of cafe culture.”



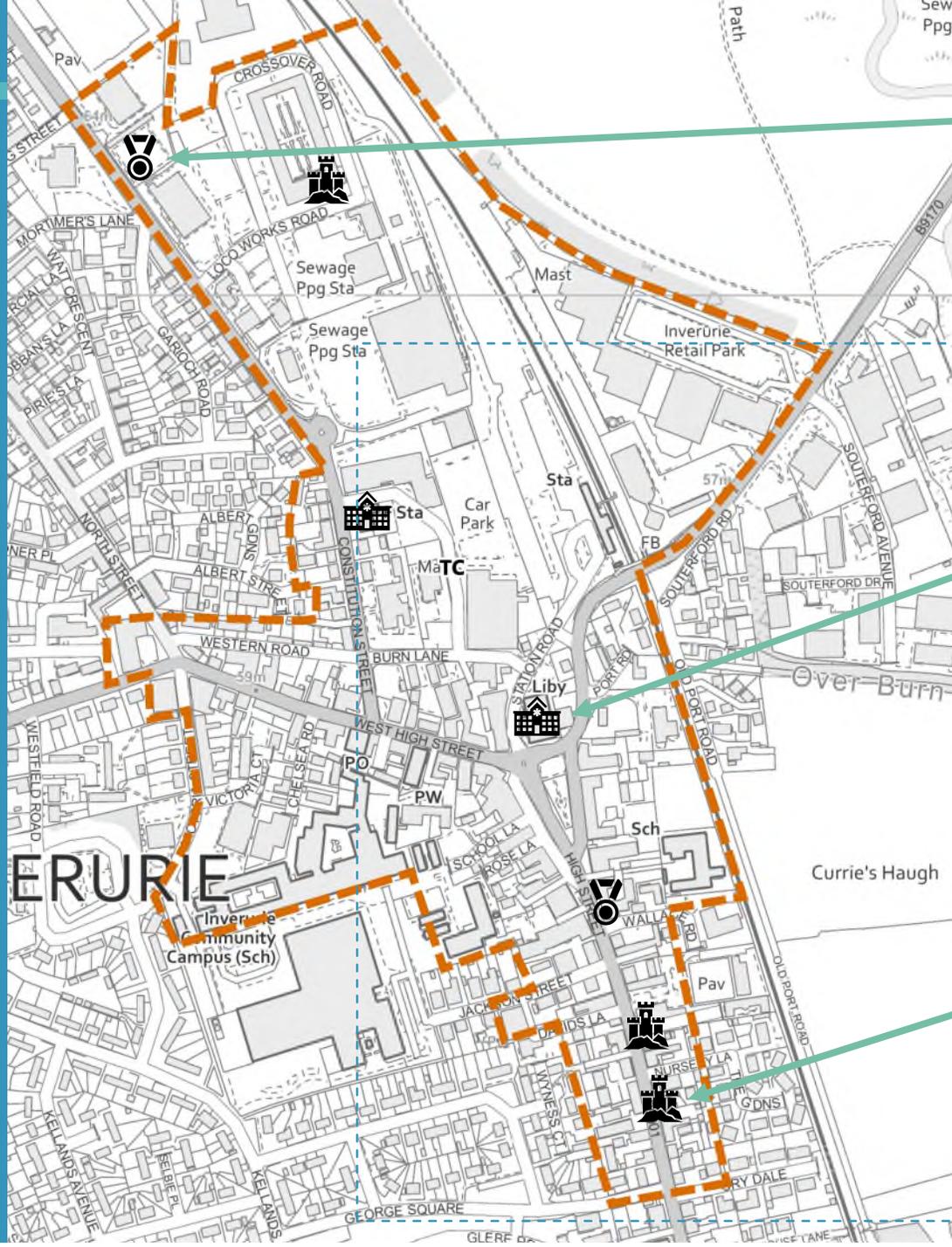
Images (Top to Bottom): The Vanilla, West High Street and Fennel, Burn Lane.

Observations: Through the community survey a number of comments were received relating to the opening hours of the cafes. It was noted that there was only one café that opens after 4pm which limits the evening economy of the town. The other comments received related to wanting further choice/ variety and the opportunity for some outdoor seating for cafes.

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: CULTURAL AND LEISURE OUTLETS, AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Observations: There is a good mix of all cultural and leisure outlets and public services within Inverurie Town Centre. These facilities include churches, bowling green, fire station and Inverurie Town Hall.

-  Cultural Outlets
-  Leisure Outlets
-  Public Services



Images (Top to Bottom): Harlaw Bowling Club, Harlaw Road; Inverurie Town Hall, Market Place and Inverurie Gospel Hall, High Street.

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: EVENING ECONOMY

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: THE VIBRANCY IN THE EVENING :

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

| | | | |
|-----------|----|-----|----|
| BUSINESS | 8 | 24 | 11 |
| COMMUNITY | 61 | 135 | 66 |

*“Not much to do evenings apart from pubs.
Cinema would be nice.”*

*“More things for teenagers to do in the evenings
to avoid them hanging out around Street
corners.”*

*“Residents are offered little by way of variety or
evening activities other than eat or drink.”*

*“Very little happening in the evenings and most
shops closed.”*

Observations: There are a large number of takeaway units within the town centre which open into the evening along with a couple of restaurants/ pubs. Other than the food/ drink industry there are no other services open into the evenings.

A number of the shops/ Hair and Beauty services have late opening hours 1 day a week which will increase the vibrancy during the evening. A desire for more evening activities within the town centre was a common response coming out of the community survey.

Examples of some of the hospitality venues open in the evening.

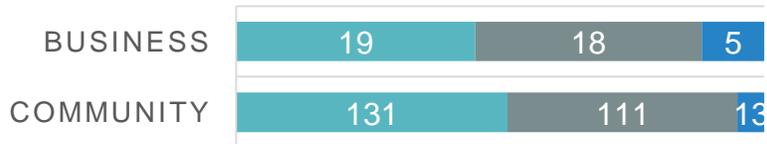
- SABAI & Asian Kitchen
- The Drouthy Laird
- Edwards
- Brewdog
- Via Roma
- Spice of Life

Units open in evening

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: COMMUNITY AND VISITOR SATISFACTION

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VALUE FOR MONEY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



“The variety of items sold in cafe/retail places is poor.”

“There are many services to choose from offering a variety of prices and quality.”

“There is a variety of services to suit all likes and budgets.”

“Variety of lovely small shops, coffee shops and restaurants offering friendly service.”

“Inverurie is mainly a friendly place to shop most shops within easy reach of each other.”

Town Centre Offer:

76%

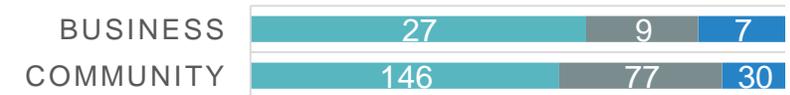
of the community agree that it offers all services expected (retail, café, pubs etc)

Observations: The standard of service in shops was ranked as the second highest ranked question in both the community and business survey.

It was positive to note that all of the survey questions relating to visitor satisfaction were above 80% when looking at the ratings for neutral and good combined. This is a level which should aimed to be maintained for future years.

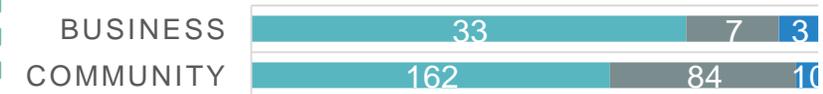
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VARIETY OF GOODS AVAILABLE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: STANDARD OF SERVICE IN SHOPS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Tourism: Data provided by VisitAberdeenshire shows the number of page views received for Inverurie in the ‘Towns and Villages’ section of their website:

2,465 Jan-Dec 2019

7,019 Jan-Dec 2020

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: MARKET

“Farmers market could be bigger.”

“For a rural area surrounded by farms, the number and quality of stalls at the farmers market it poor compared to other ones in Aberdeenshire (e.g. Huntly).”

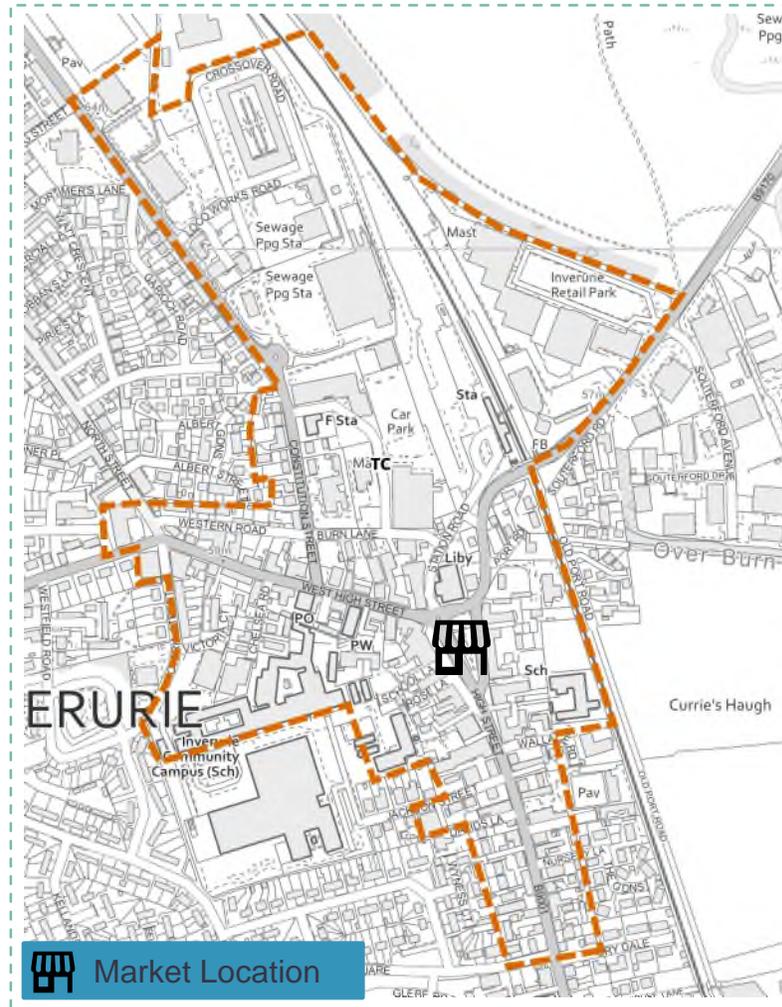
“Farmers market is great.”

“Better promotion of the Farmers market is needed.”

“Good idea to have a perment market – maybe using an indoor market arrangement.”

“The farmers market is restricted in size. A larger space would attract more businesses to market and more customers to the town.”

“There should be more events like the Farmers Market.”



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: THE MARKET?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|----|----|
| BUSINESS | 24 | 11 | 8 |
| COMMUNITY | 123 | 93 | 32 |

Observations: Inverurie Farmers Market is located in Market Place in the town centre and runs the second Saturday of every month.

The market restarted to members of the public after the first lockdown due to COVID-19 in August 2020.

The market has an active Social Media page on Facebook which highlights the producers that are attending the event.

A survey of the community was completed alongside where there was a large number of comments about the farmers market being larger in size and variety.

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: ONLINE SHOPPING

Online Offering

85% of businesses surveyed have online presence.

33% of businesses surveyed sell online.

90% of the businesses surveyed that sell online make 25% or less of their income from this.

47% of the community surveyed said they would either be likely or very likely to shop online rather than going into the town centre.

50% of the community survey noted that their attitude towards online shopping had changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

76% of the community survey noted that their usage of the town centre had decreased because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Observations: There was a real mix in responses to the questions about shopping online. A number of respondents noted that they would rather shop local than buying online. Shopping local is one of the key themes of Inverurie BID who are a strong presence within the town centre. Whilst others noted that convenience, pricing and variety of goods were the main reasons for online shopping.

“Shopping online is generally cheaper and more convenient.”

“Shop in Inverurie to shop from local businesses.”

“Rather buy things locally if they are available.”

“Lack of choice and price. Work during the day so can shop online during evening.”

“Dislike online shopping.”



FACILITIES & AMENITIES: CONNECTIVITY

Observations: Mobile coverage within Inverurie Town Centre is very strong with all of the top networks being able to be connected to at a 4G level and the Three network having some 5G availability.

For the broadband coverage there is the availability of fibre and superfast broadband to shops, offices and residential units within the town centre. There is no availability of ultrafast broadband.

There is also no free public WIFI available within the town centre.



Broadband Coverage in Inverurie Town Centre:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | FTTH/FTTP | ✗ |
|  | Ultrafast Broadband (>=100 Mbps) | ✗ |
|  | Superfast Broadband (>24 Mbps) | ✓ |
|  | Fibre (FTTC or FTTH or Cable or G.Fast) | ✓ |
|  | Wireless | ✗ |
|  | LLU | ✓ |
| A+ | ADSL2+ | ✓ |
| A | ADSL | ✓ |

Internet Speed Test in Inverurie Town Centre:

| | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|
|  | Download: | 45.2 Mbps |
|  | Upload: | 15.8 Mbps |

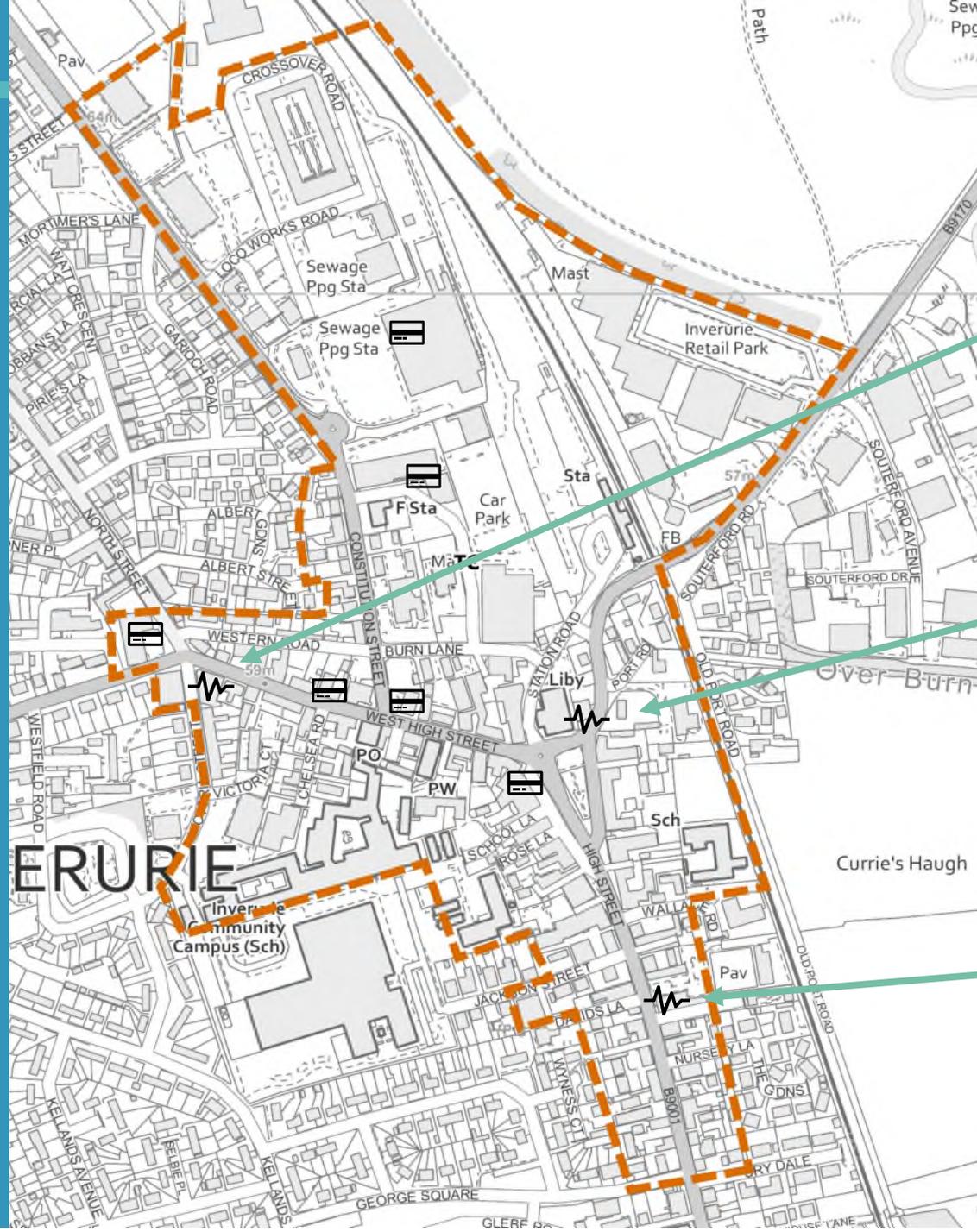
Mobile Coverage in Inverurie Town Centre:

| | | Voice | 3G | 4G | 5G |
|----------|---------|-------|----|----|---|
| Three | Indoor | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| | Outdoor | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| O2 | Indoor | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| | Outdoor | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| EE | Indoor | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| | Outdoor | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Vodafone | Indoor | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ |
| | Outdoor | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |

 Good coverage
  You may experience problems
  No coverage
  Some 5G availability

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: OTHER SERVICES

Observations: Inverurie Town Centre is well serviced by ATM machines. Additionally, there are also three Defibrillator units within the town centre allowing residents 24 hour access should they be needed. These are well distributed with one being on the western edge of West High Street one in a central location and the third to the south of High Street.



Images (Top to Bottom): Unit on 25 West High Street; Unit on 1 Inver House and Unit on 22 High Street.

 Defib Unit

 ATM Point

Good-quality work offers important benefits through income, activity, social contact, sense of identity and job satisfaction. A thriving local economy can provide work opportunities and help create lively places where people want to spend time.

WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY



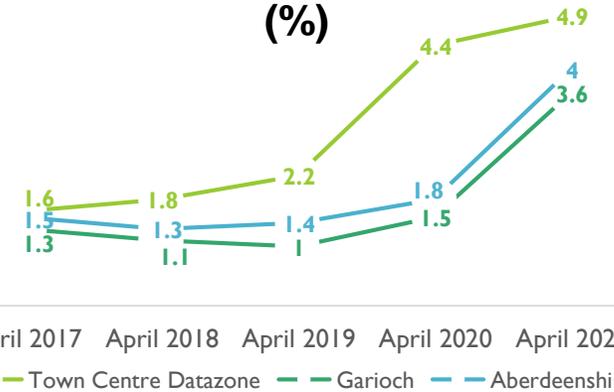
Observations: Inverurie is a key employment town in Aberdeenshire, with the wider town area employing the fourth highest number of people across the Shire. Focusing on the town centre, the current employment and income picture is as would be expected with a high proportion of retail jobs. The significant jump in the claimant count rate between 2019 and 2020 therefore likely reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the retail sector.

Top 5 Employment Sectors 2019 Inverurie Town Centre Data Zone*



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey 2019

CLAIMANT COUNT RATE^ (%)



^Includes people claiming Universal Credit or Jobseekers Allowance
Source: ONS Crown Copyright Reserved

Settlement Type:
Other Urban Area
(Settlements of 10,000 – 124,999 people)
Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification, 8-fold

Median Household Income 2020
Town Centre Data Zone
£34,097

£45,069 Garioch; £37,853 Aberdeenshire

Source: © CACI Limited 1996 - 2020 This report shall be used solely for academic, personal and/or non-commercial purposes.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020

Town Centre Data Zone*:

56-60% Least deprived in Scotland

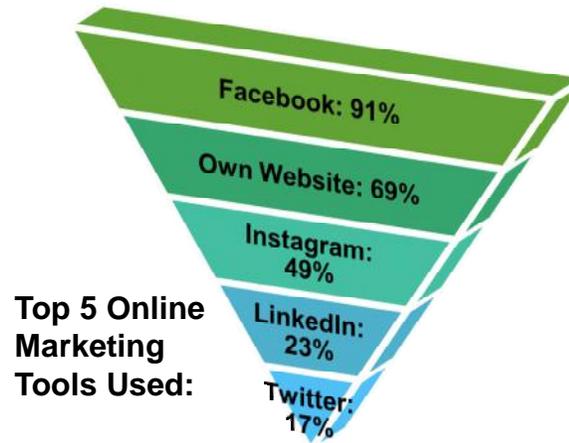
* The data zone (S01006907) that includes the majority of the town centre.

WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: BUSINESS SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

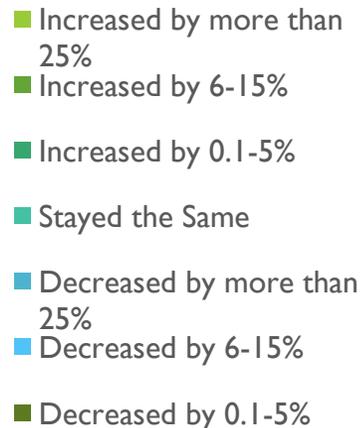
Observations: 43 businesses responded to the survey and provided a positive outlook for the town, despite the huge impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on business turnover. This resilience could be due to the large number of established, independent businesses, able to respond better than their larger chain competitors to the pandemic. Businesses are making good use of online tools and support provided by local groups.

- 82%** of business owners surveyed were **established** businesses in the town centre. **12%** are ready to sell/retire; **6%** are start-ups
- 86%** of business owners surveyed were **Independent** businesses
- 66%** of business owners surveyed were either **confident** or **extremely confident** about future business performance in Inverurie
- 19%** of business owners surveyed are looking to **grow** or **expand** in the next year, with a further **19%** in the next five years. **61%** are **not** currently considering growth or expansion

"I am a new business, only into my 3rd month now. The businesses that unfortunately had to close through Covid have already reopened or are in the process of doing so. So there are no sad looking empty spaces. The support and promoting from the We are Inverurie BID is very active in encouraging people to visit the town. People and other businesses in the community are very nice and supportive of my new business. I feel welcome and very happy to be part of the community. This makes me confident that my business will continue to grow and do well."

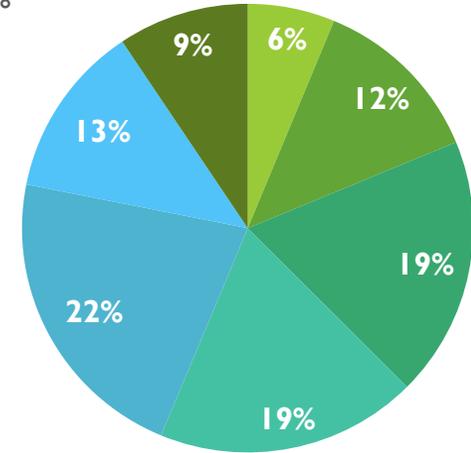


Has employment at your premises changed in the past five years?



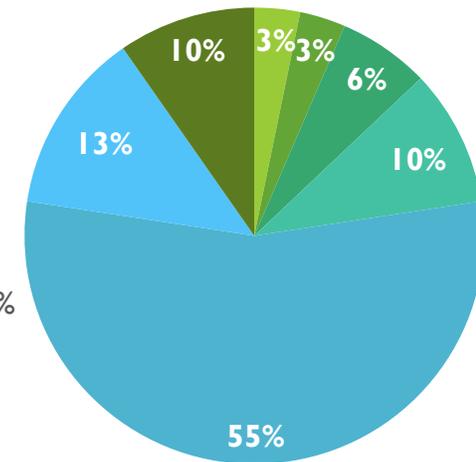
How has turnover at your premises changed in the past five years?

- Increased by more than 25%
- Increased by 16-25%
- Increased by 6-15%
- Stayed the Same
- Decreased by more than 25%
- Decreased by 16-25%
- Decreased by 6-15%



What difference have the Covid restrictions had on turnover during the period March 2020 to April 2021?

- Increased by more than 25%
- Increased by 16-25%
- Increased by 6-15%
- Stayed the Same
- Decreased by more than 25%
- Decreased by 16-25%
- Decreased by 6-15%



WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY:

PROPERTY

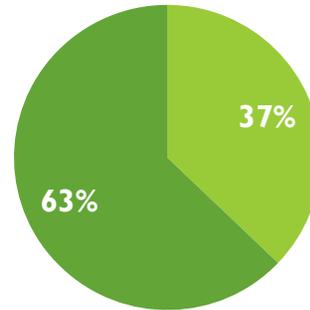
Observations: The commercial property market seems fairly stable in Inverurie, perhaps due to the large number of established businesses as indicated in the business survey. This is echoed in the number of businesses who own their own premises and a reasonably bright outlook for investment in town centre stock with nearly a third confirming they are looking to invest in their premises within the next five years. Comments received in the surveys suggested that affordable space for start-up's would be welcomed.

“Some prominent retail sites in the Town Centre are empty perhaps a council tax break for 2 years to encourage someone to take them.”

“Affordable premises to rent for new/growing businesses! I am a growing business but retail rents are comparable with Rosemount in Aberdeen at the moment. I really want to keep our business in Inverurie but it is difficult.”

“Charity shops to pay the same as local businesses in Tax.”

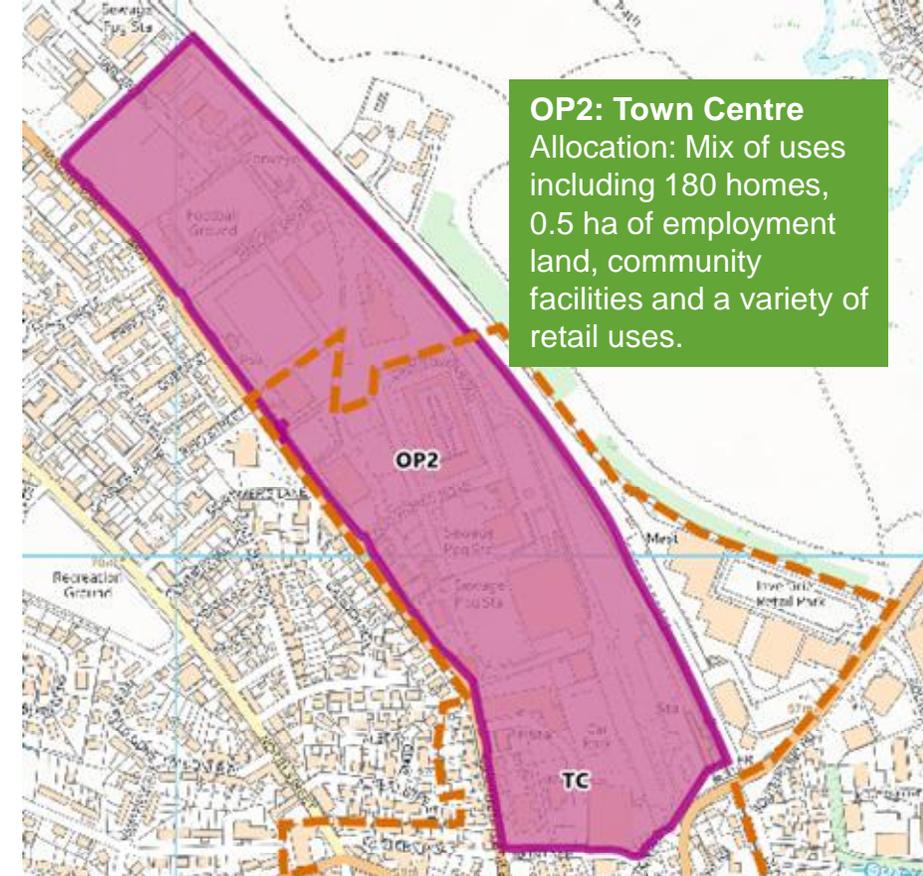
Do you rent or own your premises?



■ Rent ■ Own



17% of business respondents said they would invest in their premises in the next year, with **14%** in the next 5 years. **40%** were unsure of their investment plans.



OP2: Town Centre
Allocation: Mix of uses including 180 homes, 0.5 ha of employment land, community facilities and a variety of retail uses.

Planning Applications:

Within the town centre 12 planning applications were approved in 2020. Of note were:

- 3 for signage;
- 1 new shop front;
- 1 Change of Use from Shop (Class 1) to Financial and Professional (Class 2);
- 1 Part Change of Use from First Floor Shop (Class 1) and Annexe Music School (Class 10) to Part Professional Services (Class 2) and Non Residential Use (Class 10);
- 1 Change of Use from Shop (Class 1) to Restaurant (Class 3) and Hot Food Takeaway and Installation of Flue;
- 1 sub-division of a shop into 2 separate units.

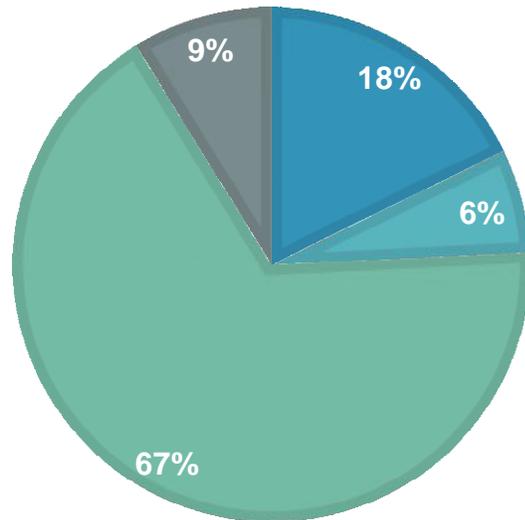
Housing is central to people's lives and helps to shape the appearance and character of places. Good places provide a mix of housing that supports a socially balanced community and meets people's needs throughout life.

HOUSING & COMMUNITY



DWELLING TYPE

■ Detached ■ Semi Detached ■ Flat ■ Terrace



The mix of dwelling types within the town centre is shown above. The majority of the dwellings are flats and there is a strong presence of flats on the upper floors in West High Street and High Street. In terms of tenure the majority of the dwellings in Inverurie Town Centre are either owned with a mortgage, owned outright or rented from a private landlord.

Inverurie Housing Profile and Population

The overall population total for Inverurie in 2016 was 13,640 and it is estimated that approximately 861 people stay within the town centre.

The average house price for dwellings within the town centre boundary in 2018 was £183,250.

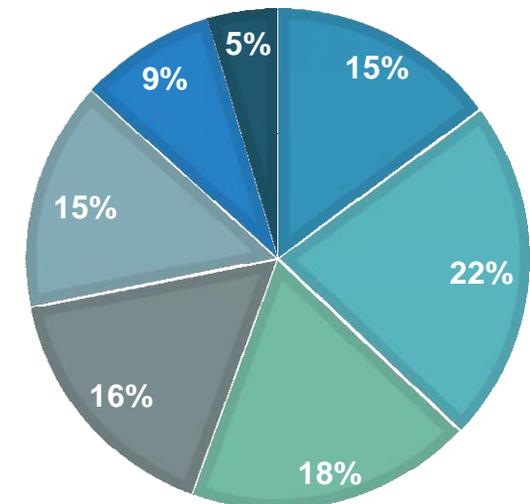


Image: Loco Works Residential Development.

In terms of Council Tax Bands (2019), Inverurie Town Centre has dwellings in each band between Band A and Band G. The majority of dwellings however are in the three bands, Band B – Band D.

COUNCIL TAX BAND

■ Band A ■ Band B ■ Band C ■ Band D
■ Band E ■ Band F ■ Band G



Feeling isolated can be damaging to our health and wellbeing. Good places provide a variety of spaces to meet and spend time with others.

Observations: Range of events scored in the bottom five indicators in the community survey, but this might be influenced by the ongoing issues with Covid at the time of the survey. There are several venues that are available for social interaction in the town centre, including a number of cafes, but facilities for young people are lacking. 'Pop-up' or outdoor event space were popular suggestions.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: RANGE OF EVENTS?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Town Centre Events*^



The following events are planned for 2022:

Platinum Jubilee Street Party & Entertainment
Friday 3rd June 2022

Pride of Inverurie Awards
Friday 26th August 2022 (Virtual event held 2021)

IN-Tune INverurie Music Weekend
23rd to 25th September 2022

*Not an exhaustive list ^Correct at time of survey

SOCIAL INTERACTION



| Venue | Indoor / Outdoor | Opening Times* |
|-------------------------|------------------|--|
| Town Hall | Indoor | Every day but booking essential |
| Farmer's Market | Outdoor | 09:00-13:00 Every 2 nd Sat |
| West Church | Indoor | 11:00 Every Sunday and via YouTube |
| Library | Indoor | Tues/Thurs 10:00-16:00 Wed 12:00-18:00 Mon, Fri, Sat Click & Collect |
| Garioch Heritage Centre | Indoor | 10:00-16:00 Thurs - Sun |
| Play Town | Indoor | 09:30-17:00 (Except Wed) |
| Gospel Hall | Indoor | Sundays: 10:15 Breaking of Bread; 11:00 Family Service; 18:00 Bible Study and via Zoom |

"I would like to see more events take place in the town centre for young people."

"Have street food events in the summer."

"Town Hall could offer more events."

"The businesses of Inverurie make a concerted effort for our community by sponsoring events."

"Would like a 'park' or community event space in the centre for more outside events."

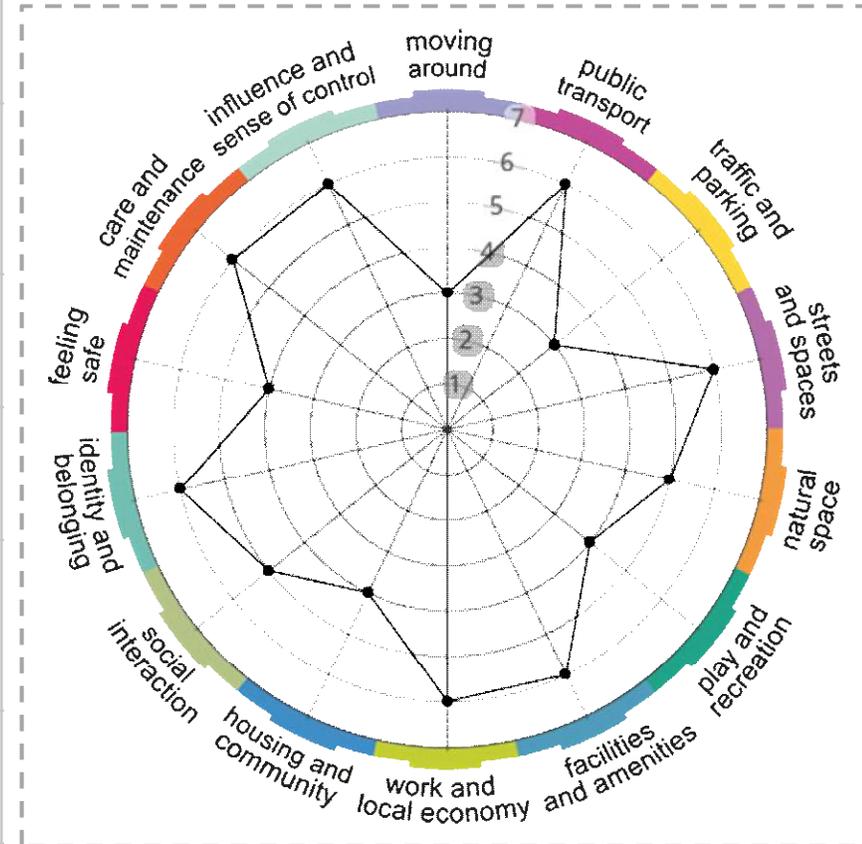


Images: Left, Garioch Heritage Centre; Right, Inverurie Gospel Hall.

* Correct at time of survey.

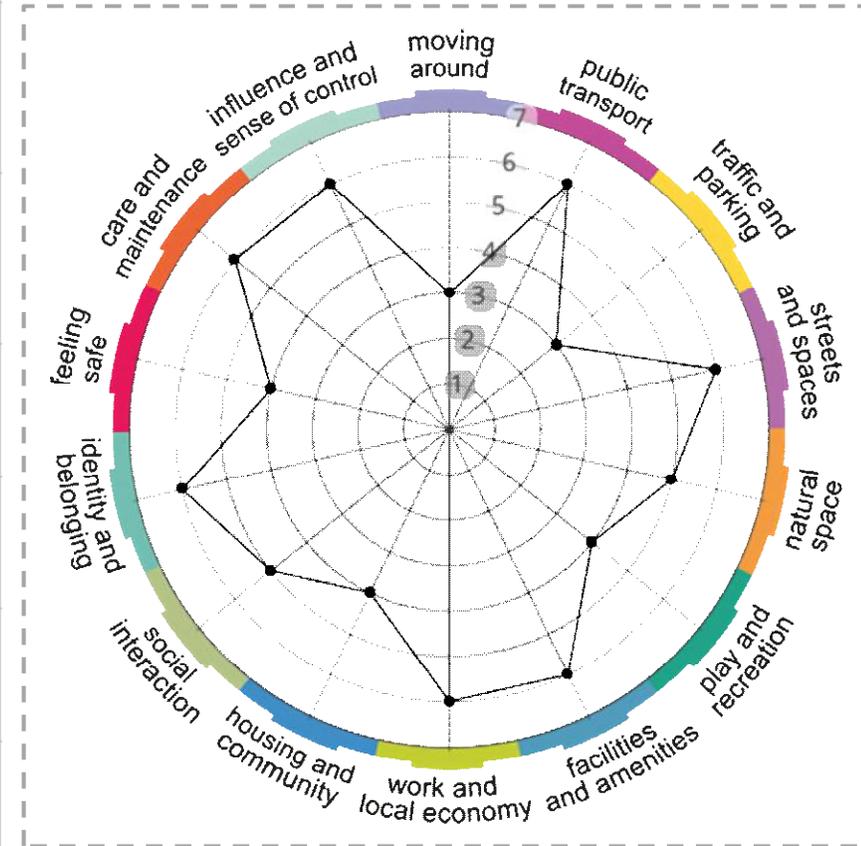
KEY CONSIDERATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

| Theme | Key Improvements |
|--|---|
| Identity and belonging Rating: 6 | Inverurie Town Centre has a strong sense of identity and scored highly for community spirit and how people felt about the town centre. |
| Feeling safe Rating: 4 | Overall, the feeling of safety during the day was very good, however improvements could be made with regards to the interaction between pedestrians and vehicles, the feeling of safety in the evening and the perceived threat from antisocial behaviour. CCTV could be considered. |
| Care and maintenance Rating: 6 | Buildings and public spaces were generally well maintained across the town centre. Future re-development at the old medical centre would provide opportunities to enhance the town further. |
| Influence and sense of control Rating: 6 | Inverurie is well-served with active organisations working together to maintain and improve the town centre. Not all people are aware of these groups so greater promotion could be explored. |
| Moving around Rating: 3 | Traffic, limited pedestrian crossings and a lack of cycle paths can make navigating the town centre challenging, particularly for those with additional access needs. Signage was informative and plentiful. Pedestrianising the area in front of the Town Hall and new crossings were popular solutions. |
| Public transport Rating: 6 | The town centre is well served by both bus and rail. A Public Transport Hub could lead to improved integration of these services and a nicer environment for pedestrians in the town centre. |
| Traffic and parking Rating: 3 | Cars dominate the town centre and consideration should be given to how the space can be re-balanced in favour of pedestrians and cyclists to improve safety, vibrancy, health and wellbeing and the environment. |



KEY CONSIDERATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES (CONTINUED)

| Theme | Key Improvements |
|--|---|
| <p>Streets and spaces</p> <p>Rating: 6</p> | <p>The pavements within the town centre was one of the main factors for the lower score as the quality of these made it harder for people with lower mobility to move around the town centre. A lack of seating areas was noted through the visitor survey so by increasing seating within the town centre would be beneficial.</p> |
| <p>Natural space</p> <p>Rating: 5</p> | <p>There is little public open space in the town centre, however what there is, is attractive and well maintained. Groups work hard to supplement this with planters etc. There was considerable support for increasing green space wherever possible to encourage social interaction, improve the environment and make the town safer.</p> |
| <p>Play and recreation</p> <p>Rating: 4</p> | <p>There are very few play and recreation sites within the town centre, however there are several leisure sites within a one mile walk of the centre. Improving facilities for young people would be beneficial.</p> |
| <p>Facilities and amenities</p> <p>Rating: 6</p> | <p>Further variety of the offering of facilities and amenities would increase the score as everything that is currently within the town centre is well maintained.</p> |
| <p>Work and local economy</p> <p>Rating: 6</p> | <p>Inverurie has a high percentage of independent businesses and a majority are positive about the future. There is a supportive business environment in the town. It will be important to maintain this vibrancy and to provide support for new starts.</p> |
| <p>Housing and community</p> <p>Rating: 4</p> | <p>The housing within the town centre currently is currently predominately flats. However, with the development of the OP2 site in the town centre this will help to increase the mix of house types.</p> |
| <p>Social contact</p> <p>Rating: 5</p> | <p>A good range of indoor venues could be supplemented with additional outdoor event space to boost opportunities for social interaction. A wider appeal to young people could be considered.</p> |



BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate? Top 5 Highest and Lowest Scoring Categories

Community

Top 5 Highest Scoring Categories:

1. Feeling of Safety During the Day
2. Standard of Service in Shops
3. Café/ Restaurant Quality
4. Café/ Restaurant Choice
5. Attractiveness of Town Centre

Top 5 Lowest Scoring Categories:

1. Traffic
2. Seating/ Areas to Congregate
3. Parking Space Availability: Cars
4. Other Attractions
5. Range of Events

Business

Top 5 Highest Scoring Categories:

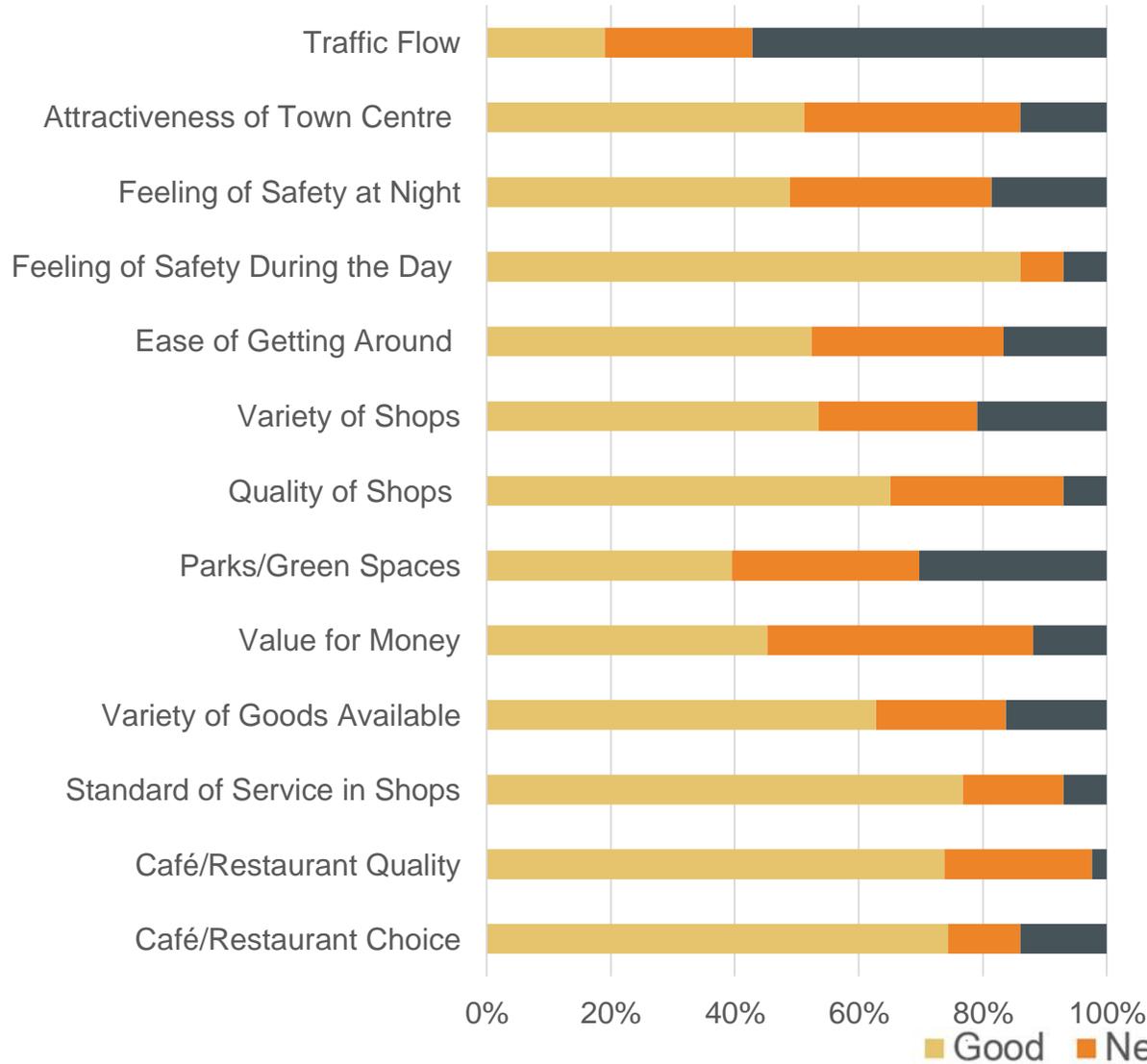
1. Feeling of Safety During the Day
2. Standard of Service in Shops
3. Café/ Restaurant Choice
4. Café/ Restaurant Quality
5. Quality of Shops

Top 5 Lowest Scoring Categories:

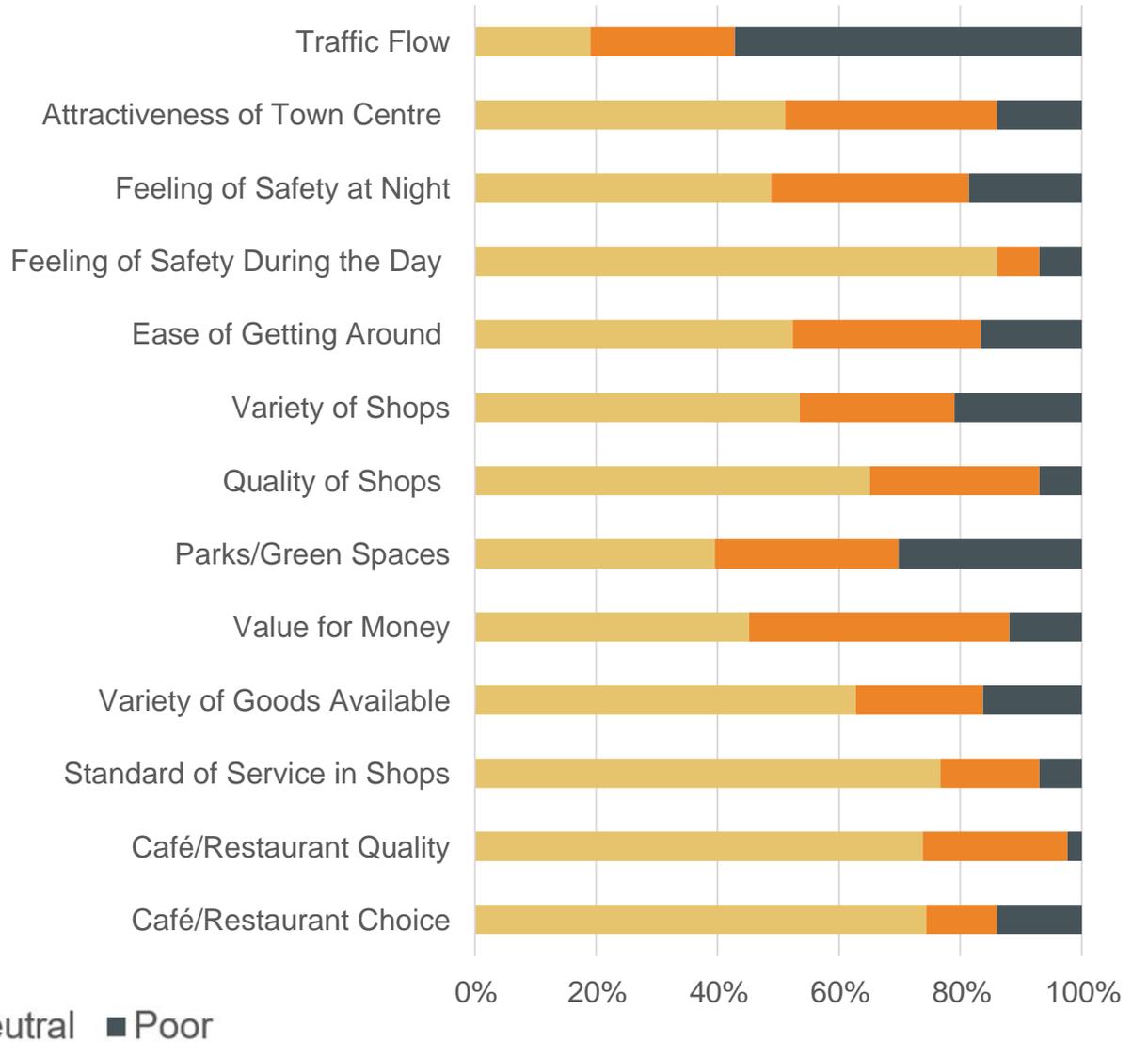
1. Traffic
- =2. Parking Space Availability: Cars
- =2. Seating/ Areas to Congregate
3. Parking Affordability: Cars
4. Pavement Quality

BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate?

Community Responses:

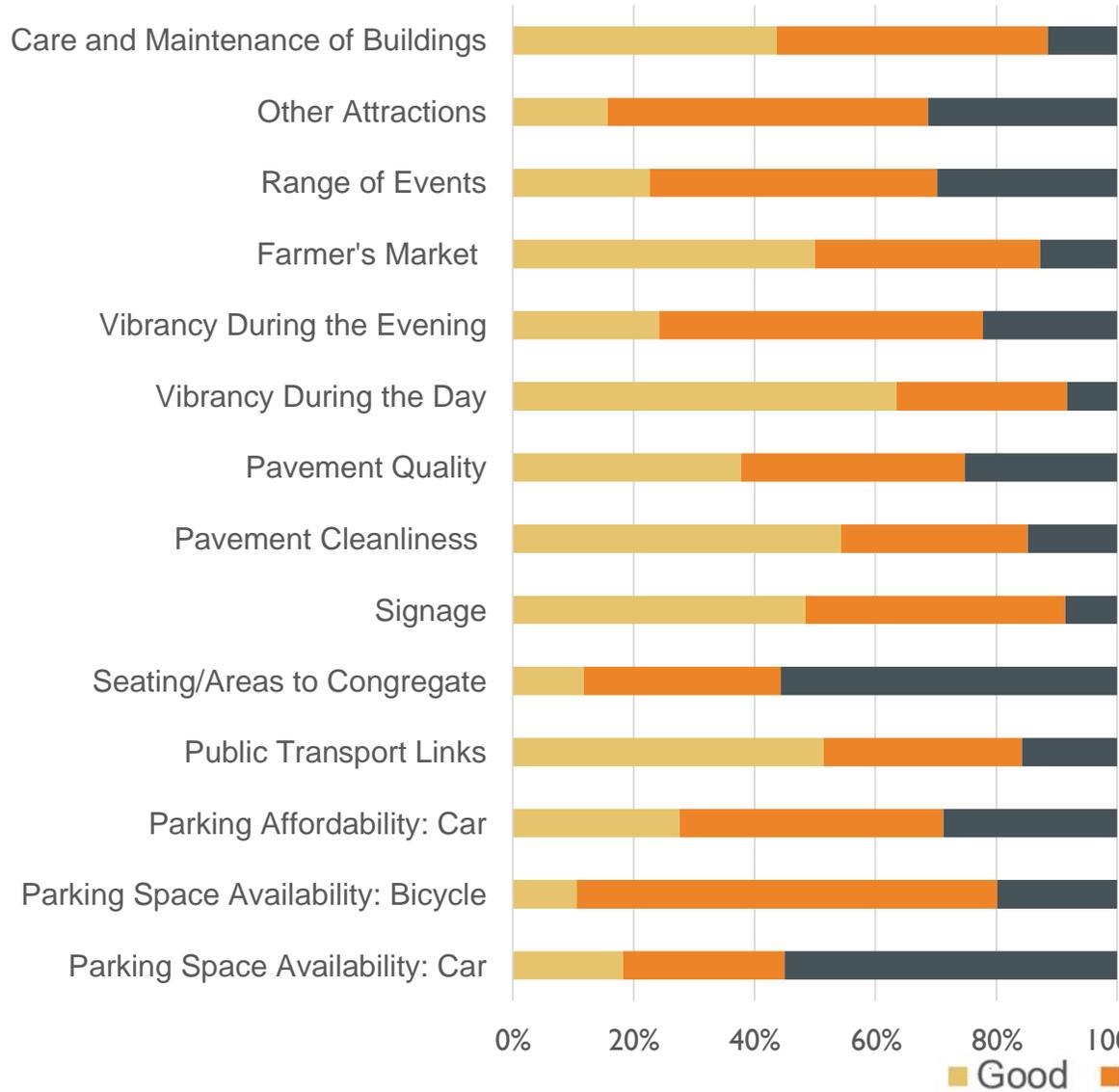


Business Responses:

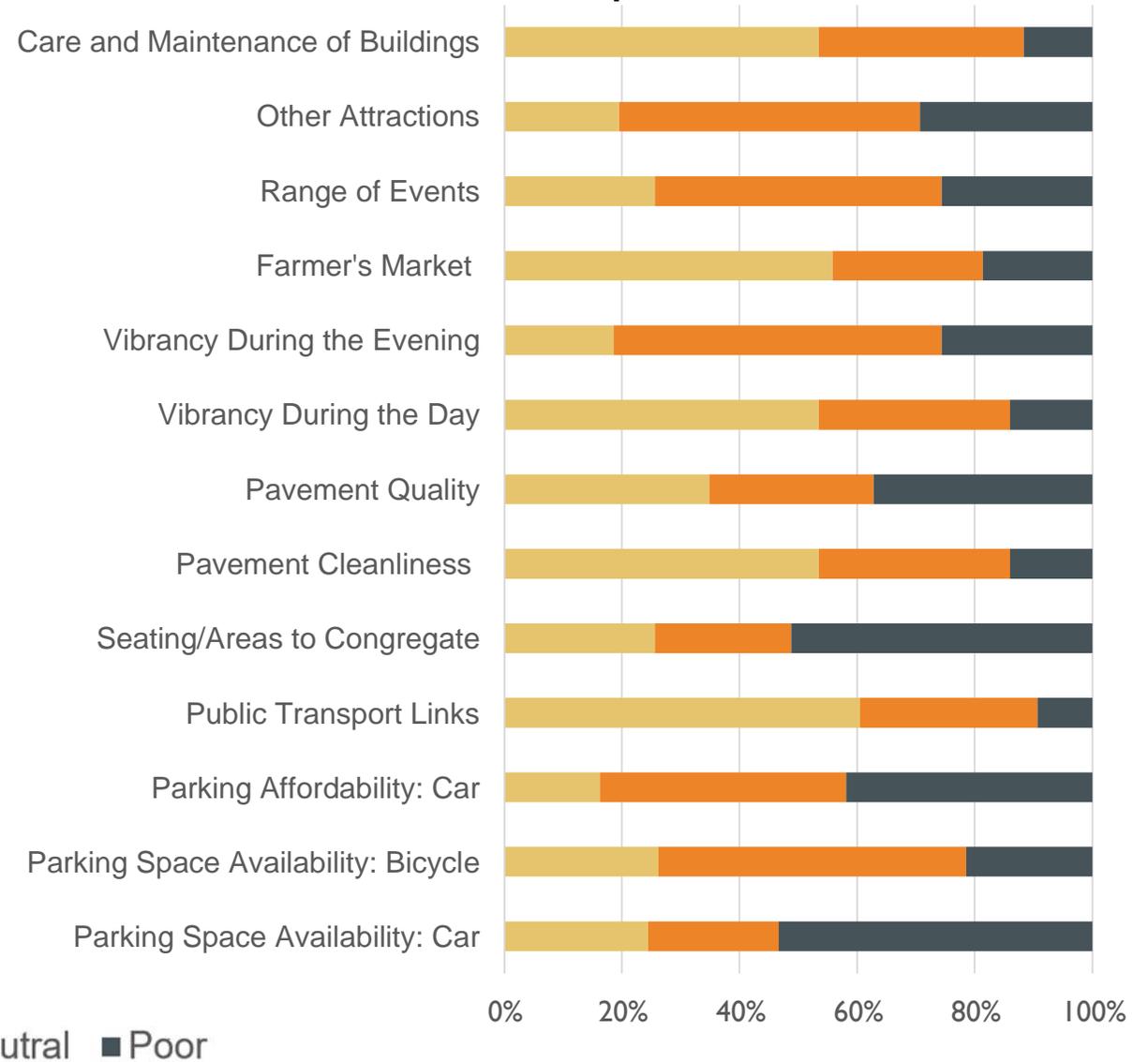


BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate?

Community Responses:



Business Responses:



A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH: WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR TOWNS

A key element of the new approach to undertaking Town Centre Health Checks in Aberdeenshire in 2021 is to work in partnership with stakeholders with an interest in the success of our town centres to collect and share knowledge, information and opportunities. This has added an extra dimension to the health checks, providing a base from which future plans, strategies, engagement and collaboration can be built upon. A big 'thank you' goes to the following teams, organisations and individuals for their contributions to the project:

Business and Community:

Derek Ritchie, We Are Inverurie BID

Inverurie Community Council

Mike Stuart
Judy Whyte
Willie Linklater
Dale Bruce
Mo Khan
Ian Sinclair
Graham Matthews
Cheryl MacLennan
Hilary Wilkinson
Lauren Rhind
Alastair Rhind

Accessibility Audit Volunteers: 3 adults and their families and 2 young people (16-25)

Partner Organisations:

Sergeant Mellis, Intervention Hub,
Police Scotland

Elaine Bisset, VisitAberdeenshire

Council Teams:

Planning Information and Delivery

Community Learning and
Development

Community Payback Unpaid Hours
Service

Economic Development

Planning Policy

GIS Team

Garioch Area Office

Community Engagement and
Equalities

Transportation

Customer and Digital Services



Aberdeenshire

COUNCIL



TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK
SEPTEMBER 2021

REPORT PRODUCED BY THE PLANNING INFORMATION AND DELIVERY TEAM
PLANNING AND ECONOMY ; ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES ; ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

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