



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK SEPTEMBER 2022

INVERURIE, ABERDEENSHIRE



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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Town centre health checks are a way of analysing the factors that contribute to successful town centres and indicate good standards of vitality and viability. 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.

Town Centre Health Checks have been completed in Aberdeenshire since 2003. However, in 2021 a new methodology was introduced 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.

NPF4 notes that policies should 'encourage, promote and facilitate development in our city and town centres, recognising they are a national asset' (NPF4, page 81).

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

For the principal town centres, the surveys are being conducted every two years as it is considered this would reduce the risk of consultation fatigue and allow for monitoring of any changes within town centres which have occurred in that period. 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 in 2021, 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

For the principal town centres, the surveys are being conducted every two years as it is considered this would reduce the risk of consultation fatigue and allow for more effective monitoring of any changes within town centres which have occurred in that period. The survey was available on Engage HQ in 2021 and was shared via relevant groups for completion. Several topics were questioned, including the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on businesses. The survey also gave an opportunity to comment on improvements that businesses 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 AND TRAFFIC COUNTS

The footfall count was completed at four 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 and members of the community. In response to feedback received following the Town Centre Health Checks in 2021, traffic counts were also added to the methodology for all towns. Where possible, traffic counts were carried out at the same location as the pedestrian counts and for the same length of time following completion of the footfall counts. Where traffic counts could not be carried at the same location at the footfall counts, these were done at the closest viable point in order to gain information on the number of vehicles using the town centre.

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

During the 2021 survey, supported by Community Learning and Development officers we worked with members of the local community with lived experience to undertake an assessment 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 includes children, parents with pushchairs, young people and adults with limited English. The results from the 2021 accessibility audit were reviewed as part of the survey this year and relevant points updated as necessary. The merits in revisiting the accessibility audit for the principal town centres will be considered in the future to determine the frequency in which they are carried out as part of the Town Centre Health Checks.

How a place looks, its history and what other people think of a 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: Respondents from the 2021 survey felt overwhelmingly positive towards the town centre. The town has an extensive network of community organisations, a strong, celebrated local heritage and a busy, independent retail and service environment which contributed to this rating, as highlighted by the comments received.

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. Today it is increasingly a commuter settlement. Source: Understanding Scottish Places and Undiscovered Scotland

IDENTITY & BELONGING



How Do You Feel About Inverurie Town Centre?



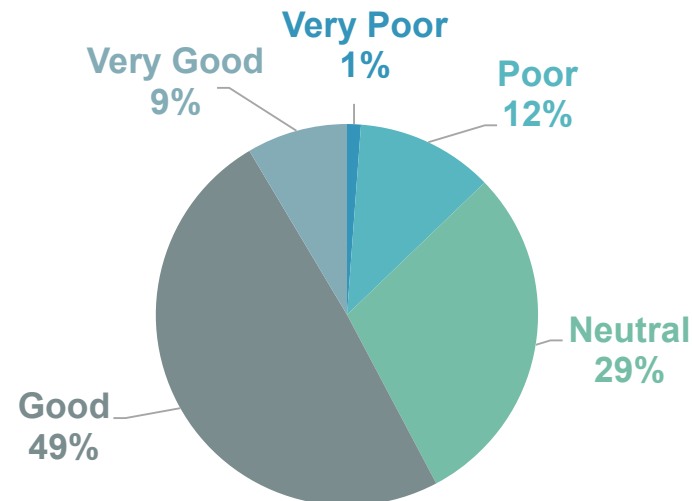
81% Community

19% Community

51% Businesses

23% Businesses

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



"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."

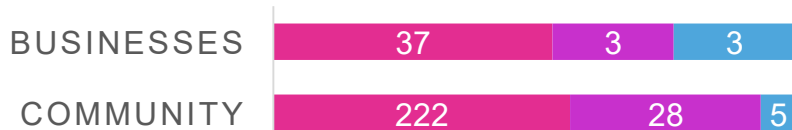
"Positive compared with other surrounding towns, however I feel it is going slightly downhill over the last few years especially with the increasing amount of charity shops and also the vaping shops."

Feeling safe in and around the places that we spend time in 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 in 2021. Safety during the evening was less positive, with many more neutral responses received. Comments given seemed to link 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.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SAFETY DURING THE DAY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SAFETY DURING THE EVENING?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



FEELING SAFE



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."

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

"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."

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

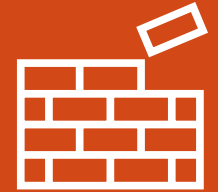
171 Incidences of crime reported
1st September 2021 – 31st July 2022
Police Scotland



Images (Left to Right): Well-lit pedestrianised area; CCTV and lighting at the Railway Station; Limited crossing points at Market Place; Mixture of lighting styles on Market Place.

Places that are well cared for can make us feel better about a place, while those that are neglected 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

Garioch Shopping Centre

West Church

Former Inverurie Medical Centre Site

Currie's Haugh

Old Academy Site

Market Place Shops

Town Hall

Observations: Buildings and public spaces in Inverurie are generally well maintained and this was recognised in both the 2021 business and community 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 are 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.”





Business and Community Survey, July 2021

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; over 130 members*	Volunteer committee and helpers.	Businesses from the Inverurie and District area.	The community; 12* members
Responsibilities	We Are INverurie BID aims to deliver a series of projects and services that will improve the trading environment to benefit businesses, their customers, clients and visitors. The BID has been successful for a second 5-year term, up to 2027. Key projects include: Marketing and promotion; Business support, facilitation and advocacy; 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; 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	Inverurie BID	Inverurie Environmental Improvement	Inverurie Business Association	Inverurie Community Council * 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."

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

48% of survey respondents were 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 Community Garioch Partnership Rotary
 Acorn Centre We Are Inverurie BID
 Vision 2030 Uryside Park Men's Shed Twinning
 Business Association Community Council
 Civic Pride Farmers Market

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

Observations: The town centre is often busy with both vehicles and pedestrians and comments received through the surveys in 2021 suggested that this was 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 additional crossing points within the town centre. Since last year, a new crossing has been installed on Burn Lane.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: GETTING AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES	22	13	7
COMMUNITY	112	78	66

"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."

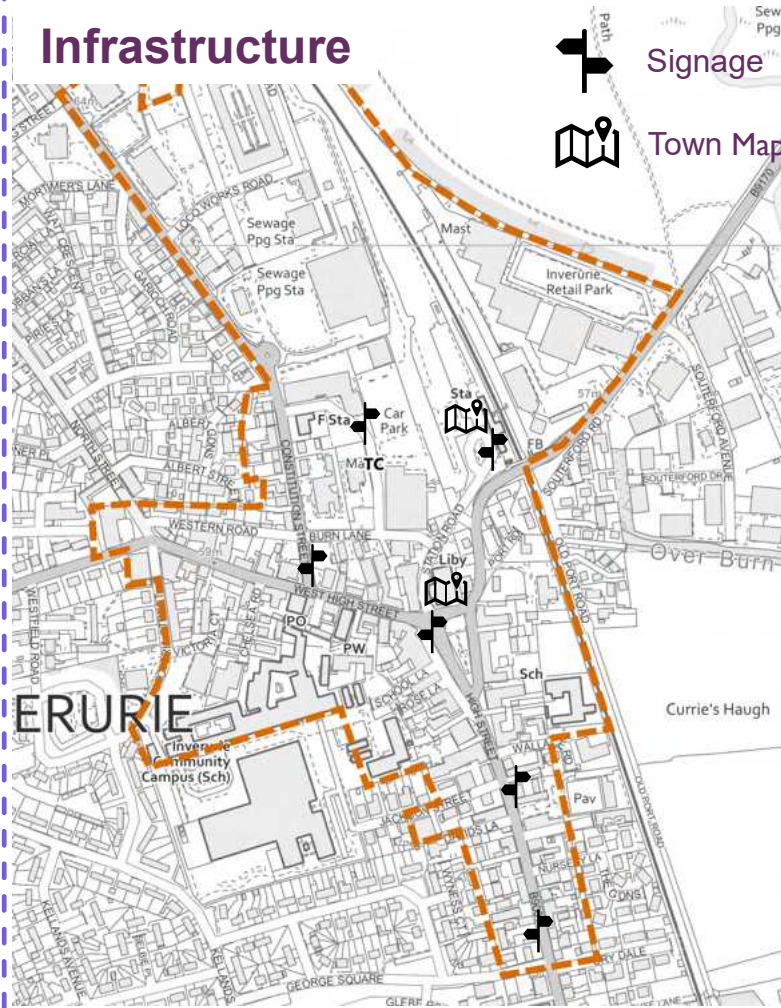
"Always a pleasant experience walking through town."

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

MOVING AROUND



Infrastructure

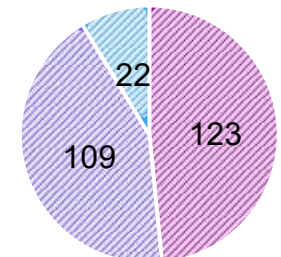


Images (Anti-Clockwise from Top Right): Town noticeboard; Fingerpost signage; Burn Lane car park signage; Zebra crossing on Burn Lane.

"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."
Business and Community Survey, July 2021

COMMUNITY - HOW WOULD YOU RATE: SIGNAGE?



■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



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 Saturday 3rd and Thursday 22nd September 2022 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 Burn Lane on Saturday afternoon (174 people). It was also the busiest count point in general over the course of the footfall survey, although the counts overall were significantly lower than last year.

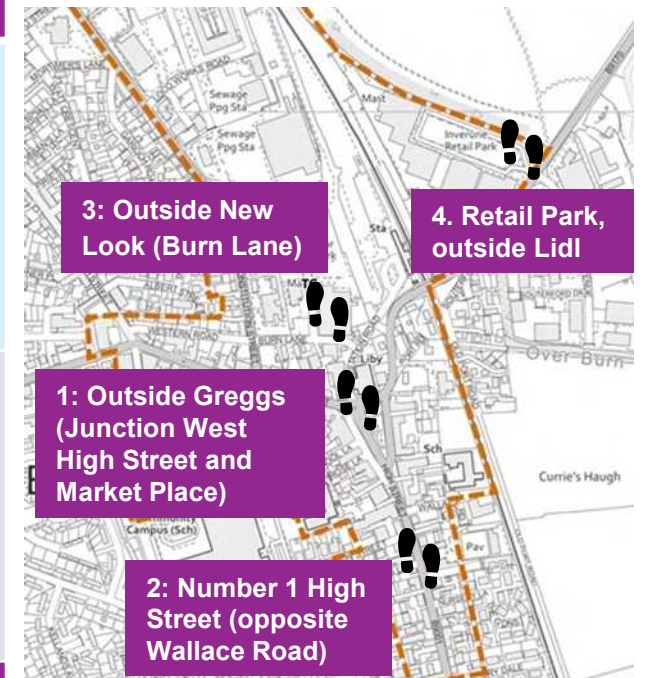
Day	Time	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3	Location 4	Hourly Total	Overall Total
Thursday 	09:30	41	40	63	19	163	950
	11:30	112	64	81	25	282	
	14:30	165	69	100	26	360	
	18:00	17	26	45	57	145	
Saturday 	09:30	85	38	66	63	252	1459
	11:30	112	89	160	114	475	
	14:30	167	66	174	79	486	
	18:00	103	39	48	56	246	
Totals		802	431	737	439	2409	

HEADLINES

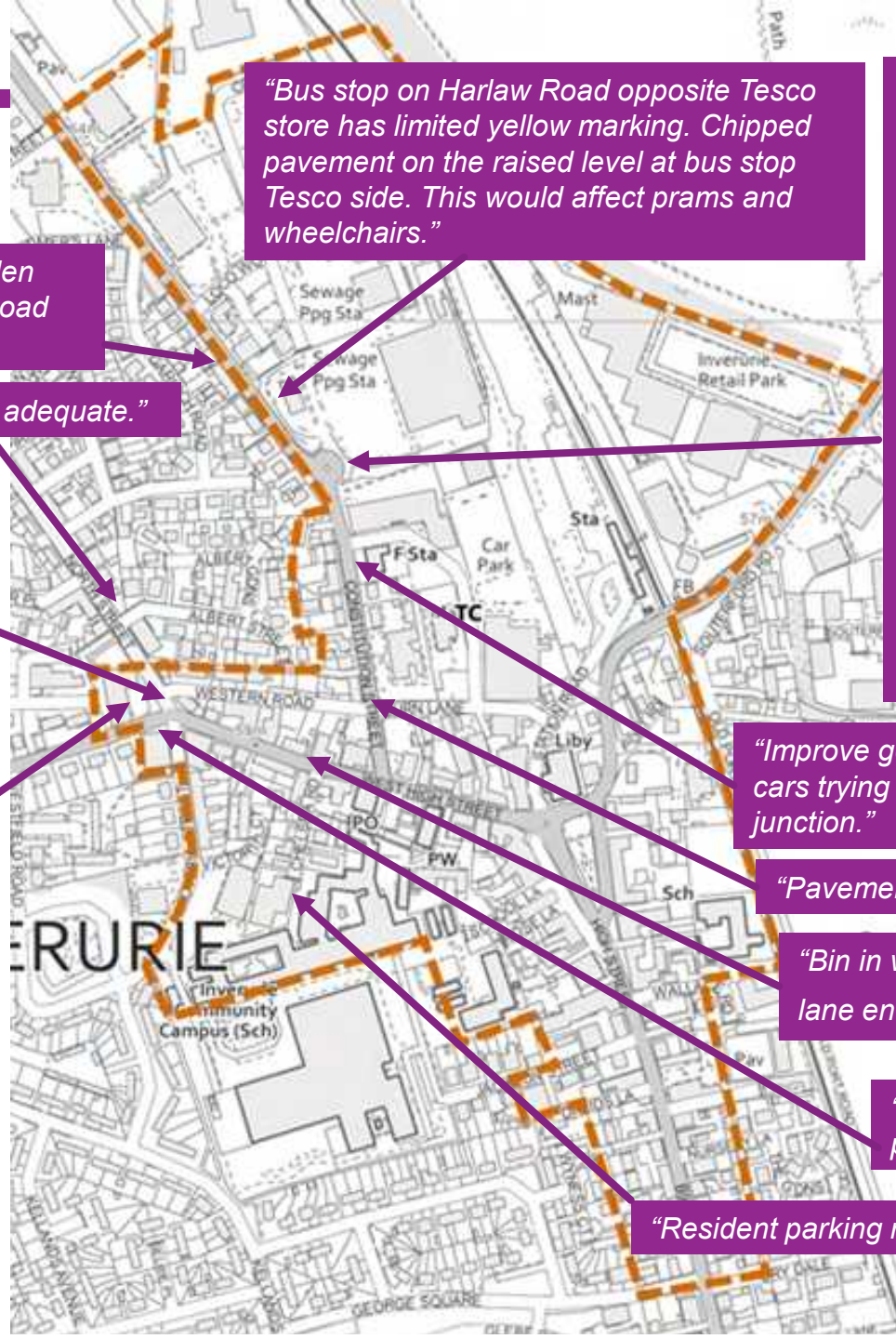
Busiest Location: Burn Lane
Busiest Time: 14:30
Busiest Day: Saturday

Quietest Location: Outside Greggs
Quietest Time: 18:00
Quietest Day: Thursday

Count Locations



ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT 2021



“Missing or shortage of bins – often hidden against wall in Constitution St/ Harlaw Road area.”

“Crossings on North Street are adequate.”

“Bus stop on Harlaw Road opposite Tesco store has limited yellow marking. Chipped pavement on the raised level at bus stop Tesco side. This would affect prams and wheelchairs.”



“Roundabout at Tesco’s is confusing for cars. Needs improvement with plants/vegetation and marking to show it is a roundabout.”

“Space is tight for lorries, but cars were not following road lanes.”



“The Green Grocer- Cobblestone path. It was thought to be historic but it was an obstacle for prams and wheelchairs.”

“Improve getting across road at fire station with cars trying to turn both left and right at this junction.”

“Pavement cracked at junction of streets.”

“Bin in wrong place, tucked in against lane entrance at Indian Restaurant.”

“Chairs/tables at pub can feel unsafe passing.”



“Shopping Centre car park is an area where young people hang about and this can be intimidating.”

“Shopping Centre carpark, when full, cars parking on road on double yellow lines.”

“Resident parking requires landscaping as it is in a wild state.”

ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT 2021: (CONTINUED)

Observations: Participants identified a number of consistent themes during the audit:

- Unsafe and intimidating crossings at a number of locations.
- Yellow and white lines are poorly maintained.
- Shopping Centre area at the top of West High Street is having a detrimental effect on the town centre.
- Tesco roundabout offers opportunities for improvements to look and feel.
- Area around the old swimming pool feels neglected.
- Some pavements are difficult to navigate due to poor surfaces or poor placement of bins or seating.
- Sense of safety - The town centre feels safe but less so on dark winter nights. Young people felt most the perceived threat from anti-social behaviour.
- Overall the town centre has an attractive feel.

"Looks nice and wide - pavements feel safe away from road at points."



"Crossing both at car park and across at the main junction from Station Square felt difficult."

"Yellow lines – length of street faded. White lines gone at bottom of Chelsea Road and lane at Post Office. While walking about it was felt that white & yellow lines have never been redone when remedial repairs carried out."



"Potholes on the road at family centre."

"Parking signage confusing adjacent to the old swimming pool car park, is it private or not? Signage is small in the residents' section and large on other but are they both private? Yellow Bus signage at old swimming pool needs removed."

"Round M&S looks nice but bollards round the shopping centre are a muted colour which is a visibility issue, along with trip hazards (uncleared tree stumps and their surrounds need removed)."



"Bridge across Railway - Feels unsafe crossing after the bridge towards retail park at Garden Centre but also at the Railway Station."

"Toilet in quite a good place."



"Crossing close to roundabout very difficult, didn't feel safe either side."



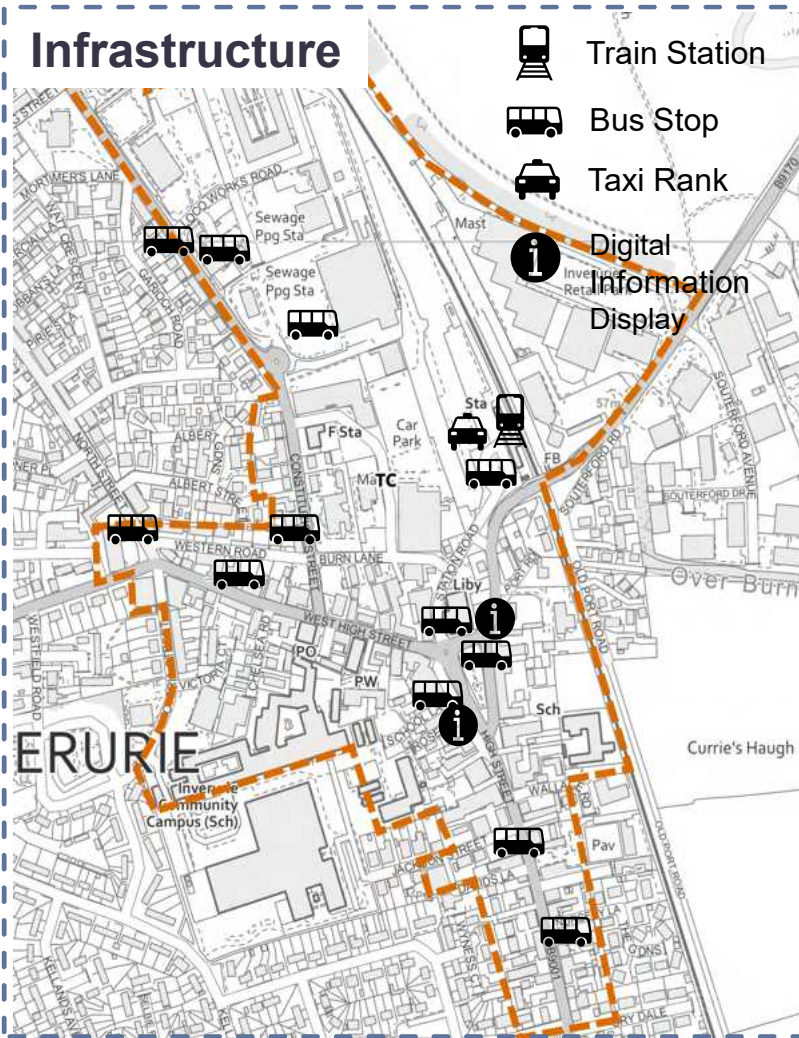
Access to an affordable, reliable and well-connected public transport service is important for all communities. Good public transport encourages people to get around in ways that are better for the environment.

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 in 2021 seemed generally happy with public transport, although 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. There has been a reduction in the number of services to Insch, Alford, Aberdeen and the town circular route, but an additional route added to Kintore since last year.



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

PUBLIC TRANSPORT



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

	Good	Neutral	Poor
BUSINESSES	26	13	4
COMMUNITY	130	83	40

“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).”

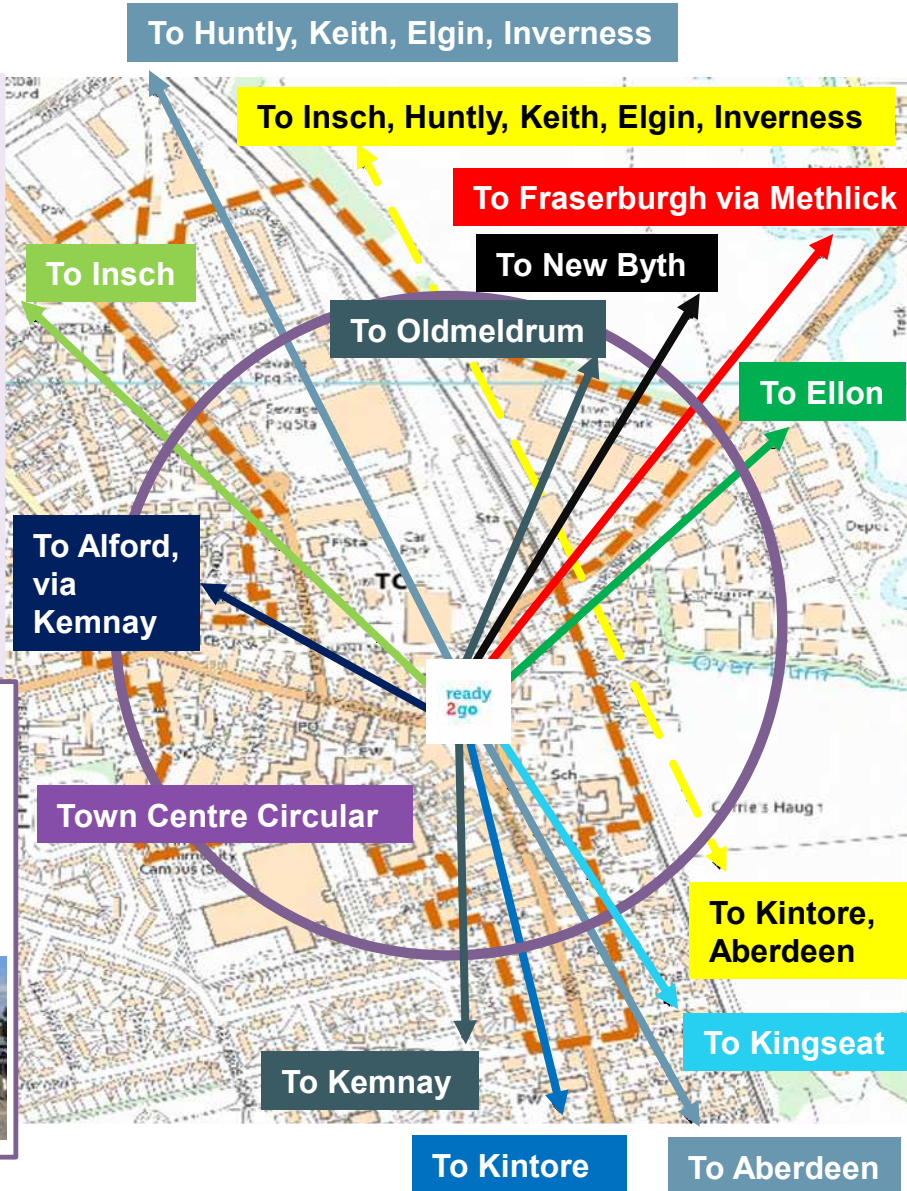
“Getting rid of the bus stops and car park here (town hall) would make this a really nice, designated public space where events could be hosted.”

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

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

Ready 2 Go On Demand Bus Service:
 Mon-Fri
 06:30 - 19:30
 Sat 07:30 - 18:30
 From £1.60



Route* (all buses from Town Hall or Market Place)	Frequency (per week day)	Fastest Journey Time	Earliest Travel Time	Latest Travel Time	Cost Single Standard Ticket
Train to Aberdeen	38	24mins	06:40	23:21	£6.20
Train to Inverness	11	1hr 48mins	06:41	22:24	£27.80
Bus to Aberdeen (10/B/C)	29	47mins	05:40	22:51	£5.70
Bus to Huntly (10/B/C)	17	41mins	08:21	23:15	£7.80
Bus to Kintore (37)	14	14mins	05:31	18:31	£3.10
Bus to Insch (41)	2	22mins	19:11	19:17	£4.20
Bus to Fraserburgh (452)	1 (Tues only)	1hr 21mins	12:23	N/a	£4.20
Bus to Ellon (49)	6	32mins	08:05	17:25	£5.70
Bus to Alford (421)	3 (Sat only)	45mins	08:45	17:55	£5.70
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)	28mins	12:05	N/a	£3.10
Town Centre Circular, Town Hall stop (22)	4	22mins	09:30	13:15	£1.60

* Correct at time of survey

TRAFFIC & PARKING

TRAFFIC



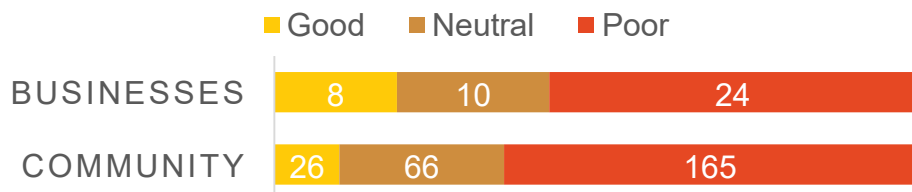
Too much traffic can cause problems for people who live and work in town centres as well as visitors. Traffic and parking arrangements that allow people to move around safely can help people to get the most out of a place.

Observations: One of the most commented topics within the 2021 community survey related to the traffic flow around the town centre. It was also the lowest ranked topic in both of the 2021 community and business surveys. 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.

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.

It was identified through the survey that the majority of users of the town centre, 73%, travelled less than 5 miles to get to the town centre. Only 6% of the respondents noted that they travelled more than 15 miles to get into the town centre.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: TRAFFIC FLOW?



“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.”

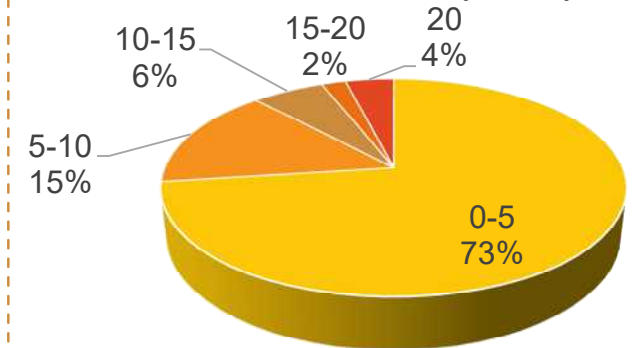
“Need traffic calming measures.”

“Traffic management needs to be looked at.”

“More traffic free areas.”

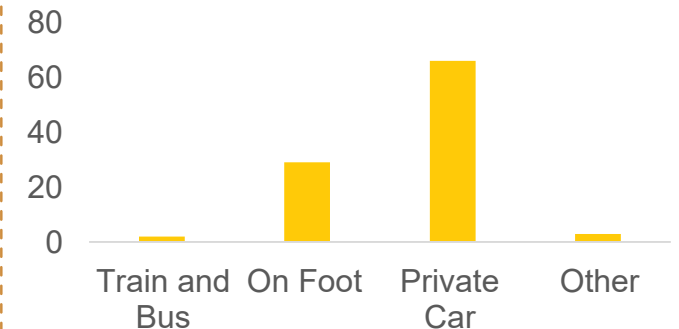
Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Distance Travelled to Use the Town Centre (Miles)



Source: Community Survey July 2021

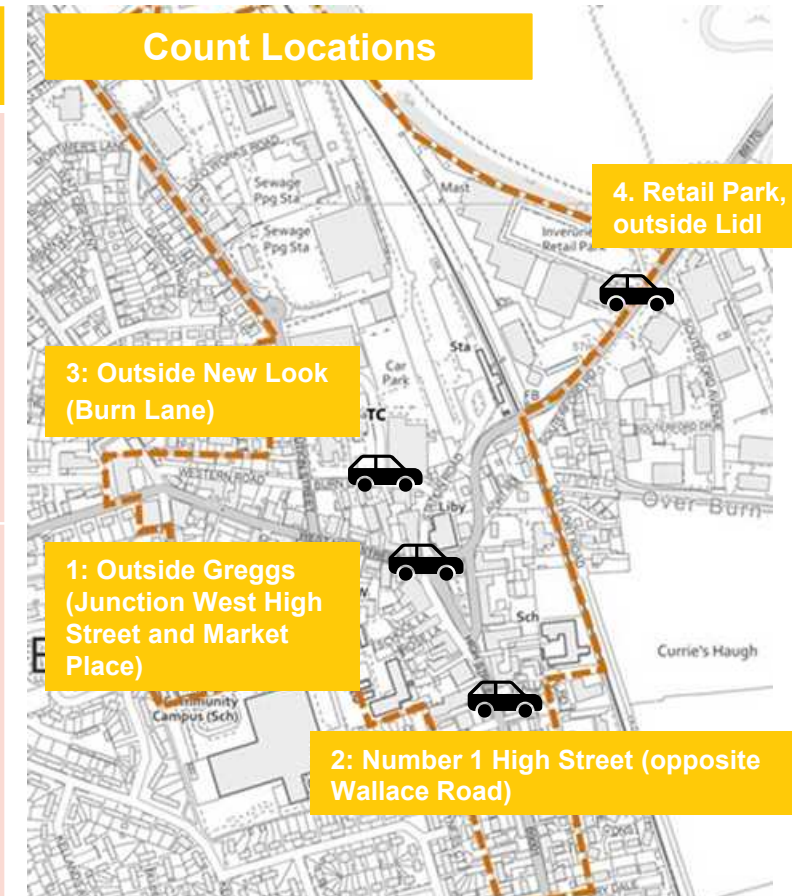
How would you generally travel to the town centre:



Source: Community Survey July 2021

MOVING AROUND: TRAFFIC SURVEY

Day		9:45am-10:00am		11:45am-12noon		2:15:2:30pm		5:45pm-6:00pm		Total number of Vehicles
		Car		Car		Car		Car		
Thursday	Location 1	Car	219	Car	227	Car	240	Car	240	1,132
		Buses	4	Buses	6	Buses	4	Buses	3	
		Lorries	8	Lorries	3	Lorries	2	Lorries	1	
		Vans	34	Vans	35	Vans	34	Vans	23	
		Taxis	13	Taxis	5	Taxis	14	Taxis	3	
		Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	3	Bicycles	0	
		Other	9	Other	1	Other	1	Other	0	
	Location 2	Car	235	Car	213	Car	283	Car	244	1,200
		Buses	3	Buses	1	Buses	5	Buses	4	
		Lorries	7	Lorries	5	Lorries	3	Lorries	2	
		Vans	34	Vans	50	Vans	45	Vans	31	
		Taxis	7	Taxis	2	Taxis	10	Taxis	2	
		Bicycles	1	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	5	
		Other	1	Other	1	Other	2	Other	4	



MOVING AROUND: TRAFFIC SURVEY

Day		9:45am-10:00am		11:45am-12noon		2:15:2:30pm		5:45pm-6:00pm		Total number of Vehicles
Thursday	Location 3	Car	100	Car	133	Car	97	Car	108	500
		Buses	0	Buses	1	Buses	1	Buses	1	
		Lorries	0	Lorries	0	Lorries	1	Lorries	0	
		Vans	11	Vans	9	Vans	13	Vans	8	
		Taxis	4	Taxis	4	Taxis	2	Taxis	1	
		Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	1	Bicycles	2	
		Other	0	Other	1	Other	0	Other	2	
	Location 4	Car	116	Car	127	Car	155	Car	169	675
		Buses	0	Buses	0	Buses	1	Buses	0	
		Lorries	0	Lorries	2	Lorries	10	Lorries	1	
		Vans	17	Vans	19	Vans	33	Vans	9	
		Taxis	1	Taxis	0	Taxis	4	Taxis	0	
		Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	2	Bicycles	1	
		Other	0	Other	1	Other	2	Other	5	
Hourly Totals (all traffic):		824		846		968		869		3,507

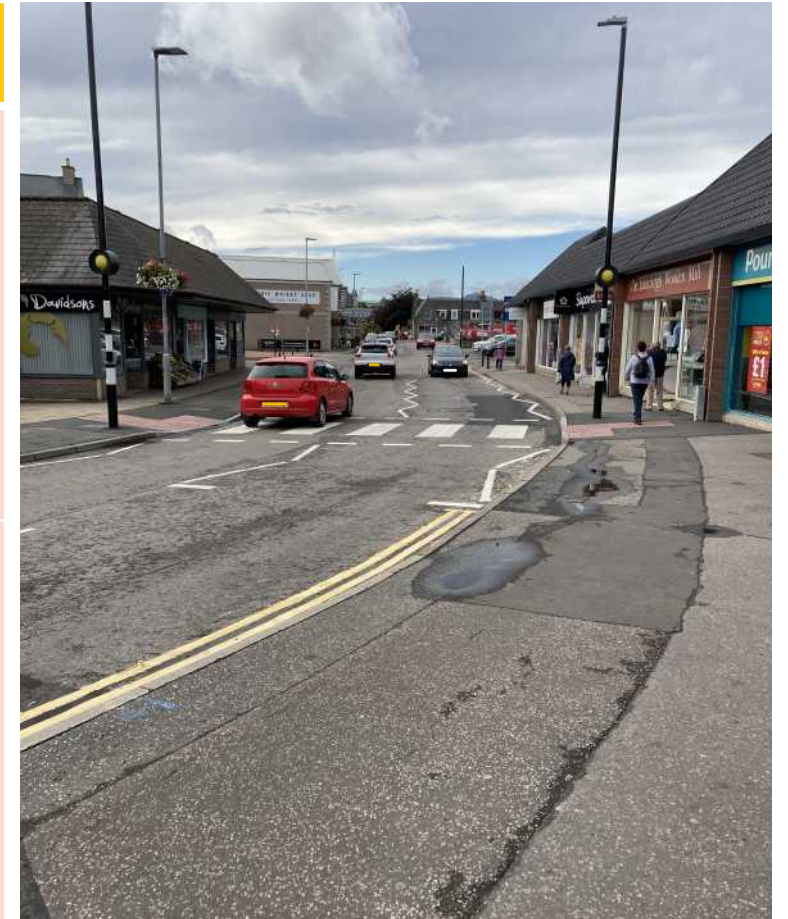


Image: Burn Lane.

MOVING AROUND: TRAFFIC SURVEY

Day		9:45am-10:00am		11:45am-12noon		2:15:2:30pm		5:45pm-6:00pm		Total number of Vehicles
Saturday	Location 1	Car	285	Car	222	Car	196	Car	253	1,096
		Buses	5	Buses	6	Buses	1	Buses	6	
		Lorries	0	Lorries	0	Lorries	0	Lorries	2	
		Vans	32	Vans	18	Vans	21	Vans	8	
		Taxis	6	Taxis	3	Taxis	3	Taxis	11	
		Bicycles	1	Bicycles	1	Bicycles	1	Bicycles	3	
		Other	1	Other	4	Other	3	Other	4	
	Location 2	Car	237	Car	292	Car	283	Car	169	1,105
		Buses	4	Buses	5	Buses	2	Buses	2	
		Lorries	4	Lorries	0	Lorries	1	Lorries	1	
		Vans	32	Vans	18	Vans	15	Vans	11	
		Taxis	5	Taxis	2	Taxis	5	Taxis	3	
		Bicycles	1	Bicycles	1	Bicycles	3	Bicycles	1	
		Other	2	Other	1	Other	1	Other	4	



Image: High Street.

MOVING AROUND: TRAFFIC SURVEY

Day		9:45am-10:00am		11:45am-12noon		2:15:2:30pm		5:45pm-6:00pm		Total number of Vehicles
Saturday	Location 3	Car	122	Car	156	Car	132	Car	105	544
		Buses	0	Buses	0	Buses	2	Buses	0	
		Lorries	0	Lorries	0	Lorries	0	Lorries	0	
		Vans	6	Vans	4	Vans	5	Vans	4	
		Taxis	3	Taxis	1	Taxis	0	Taxis	1	
		Bicycles	1	Bicycles	2	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	
		Other	0	Other	0	Other	0	Other	0	
	Location 4	Car	120	Car	114	Car	337	Car	172	768
		Buses	0	Buses	0	Buses	1	Buses	0	
		Lorries	0	Lorries	0	Lorries	0	Lorries	0	
		Vans	6	Vans	5	Vans	3	Vans	2	
		Taxis	0	Taxis	0	Taxis	2	Taxis	0	
		Bicycles	0	Bicycles	0	Bicycles	1	Bicycles	3	
		Other	0	Other	0	Other	1	Other	1	
Hourly Totals (all traffic):		873		855		1,019		766		3,513

HEADLINES

Busiest Location: High St at Wallace Rd
Busiest Time: 14:15
Busiest Day: Thursday

Quietest Location: Burn Lane
Quietest Time: 17:45
Quietest Day: Saturday

Observations: Vehicle counts were undertaken on Saturday 3rd and Thursday 22nd September 2022 for a duration of 15 minutes, four times a day, in two locations. These give information on the number of cars that are passing through the town centre. It cannot be confirmed whether these cars have all contributed to the local economy but were in the town centre at the time of the count.

The vehicle count findings showed the vehicle numbers were higher on both the weekday slot and the Saturday slot at Location 1 (West High Street and Market Place) and Location 2 (Burn Lane) than the other two locations, although the highest count was taken at Location 3 High Street at Wallace Road.

TRAFFIC & PARKING

CAR PARKING AFFORDABILITY

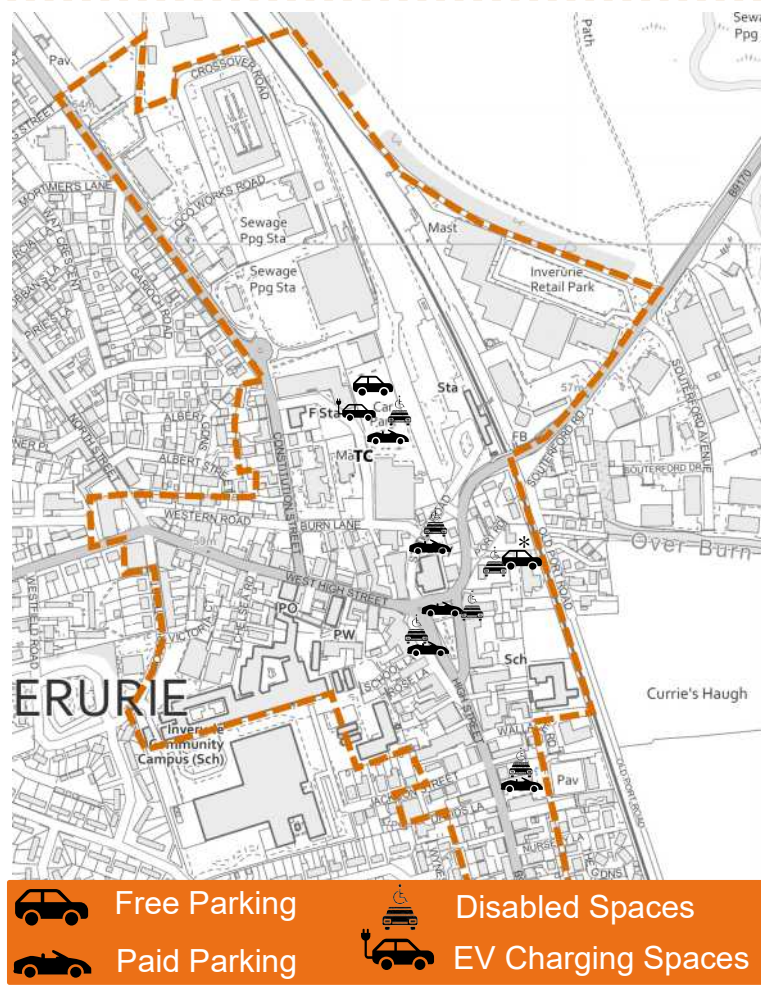
Parking Costs

£0.50

Average hourly rate
September 2022

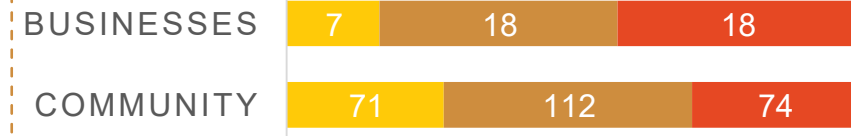


Images: (Top Left and Clockwise): Burn Lane Car Park, Market Place Car Park and The Square Car Park.



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKING AFFORDABILITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



- “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.”

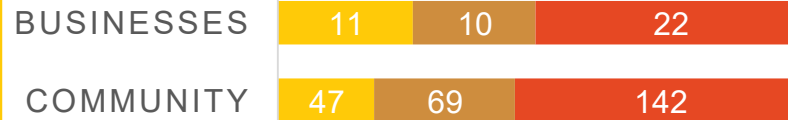
“Parking outside of shops is a problem and restricts the traffic flow around the town centre.”

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

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PARKING AVAILABILITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



Observations: Parking availability was one of the worst rated topics within both the 2021 community and business surveys. Parking affordability was rated slightly better 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. There were also common themes noted on the availability, one of which was that there was not 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

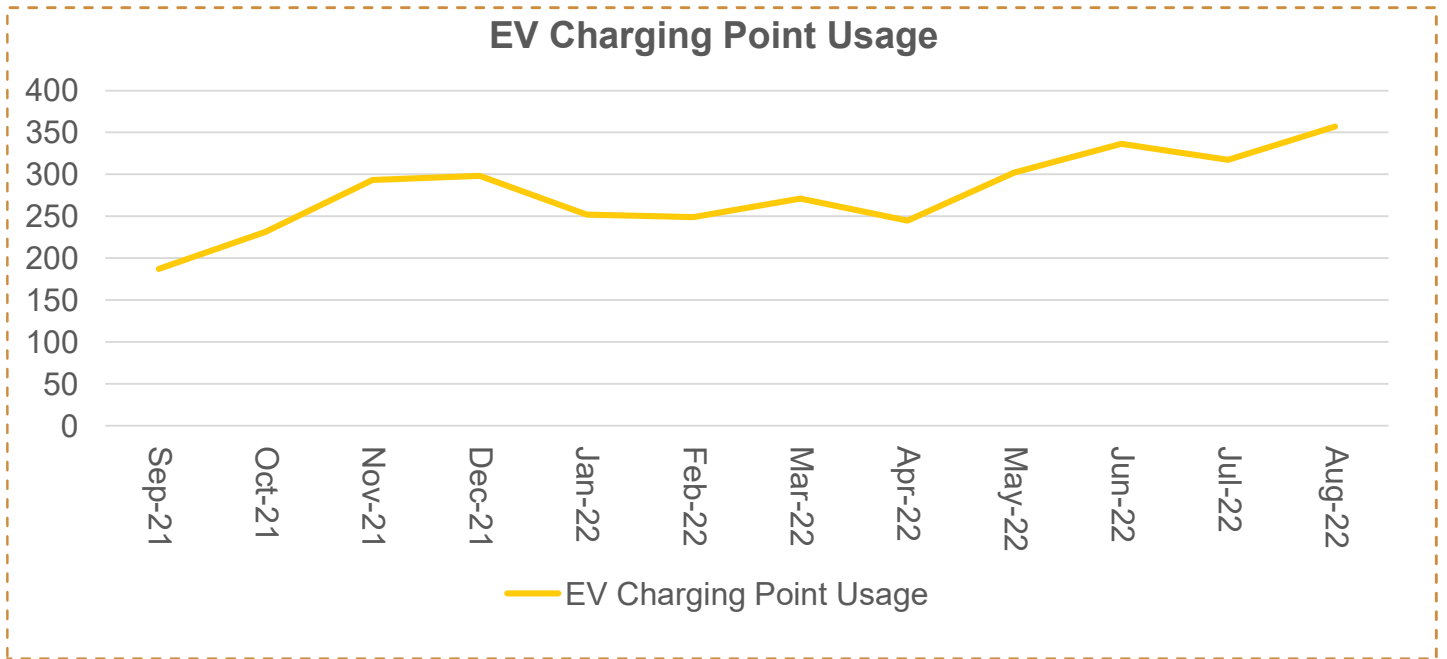
4 No. of 50kW charging spaces

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. The usage of the EV charging points is fairly steady month on month and through 2022 has been gradually increasing. No comments, positive or negative, were received in relation to the EV charging points through the 2021 community survey.

Images (Both): Burn Lane Car Park.



EV Charging Points

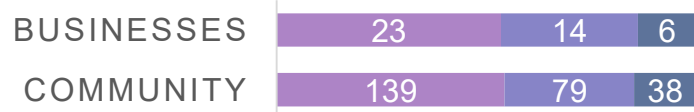
August 2022

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.”

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

STREETS & SPACES

ATTRACTIVENESS OF TOWN CENTRE



Housing and Garioch Heritage Centre

Town Hall

Planters and Public Art

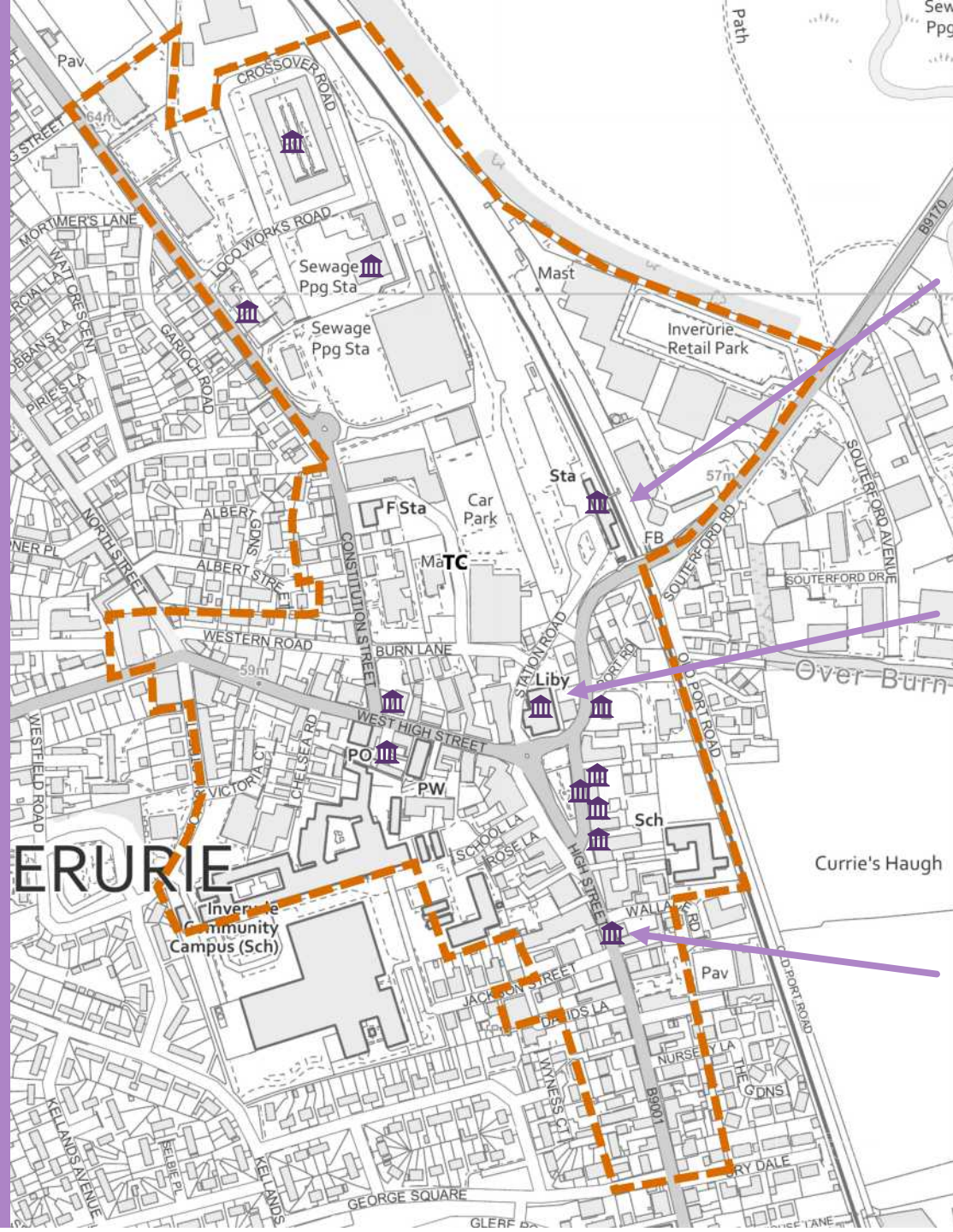
Planting

STREETS & SPACES: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

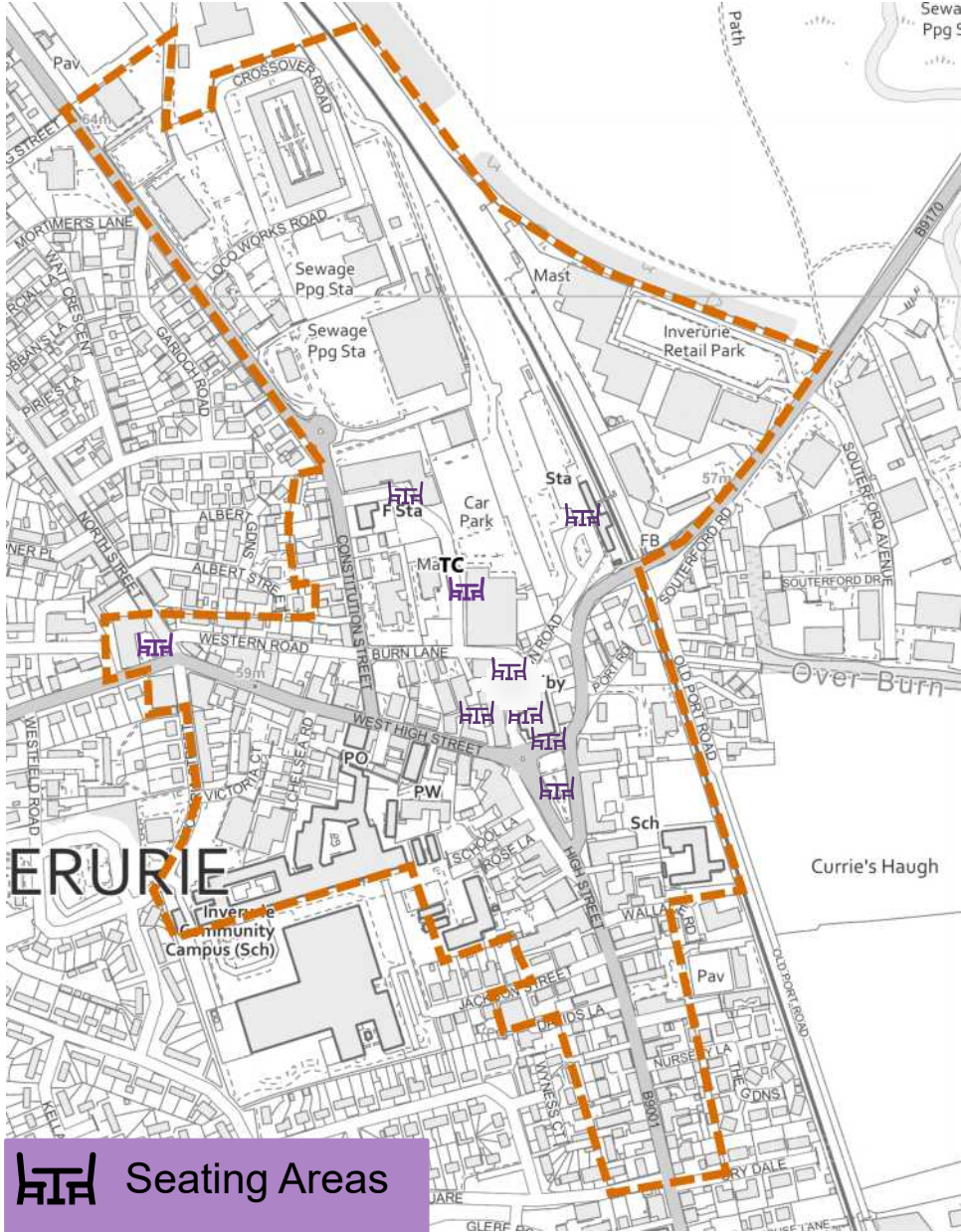
Observations: There are 13 listed buildings within Inverurie Town Centre. Of these 13, 8 are Category B Listed and 5 are Category C listed.

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 but is at the 'Restoration In Progress' stage as it forms 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

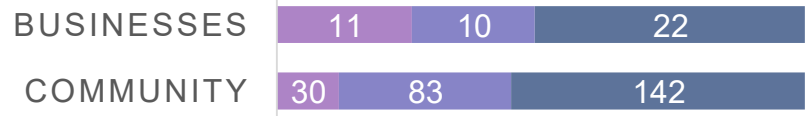


Image: Memorial Garden.

“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.”

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

Observations: Concerns over a lack of seating was noted strongly throughout the 2021 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 was 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: PUBLIC ART

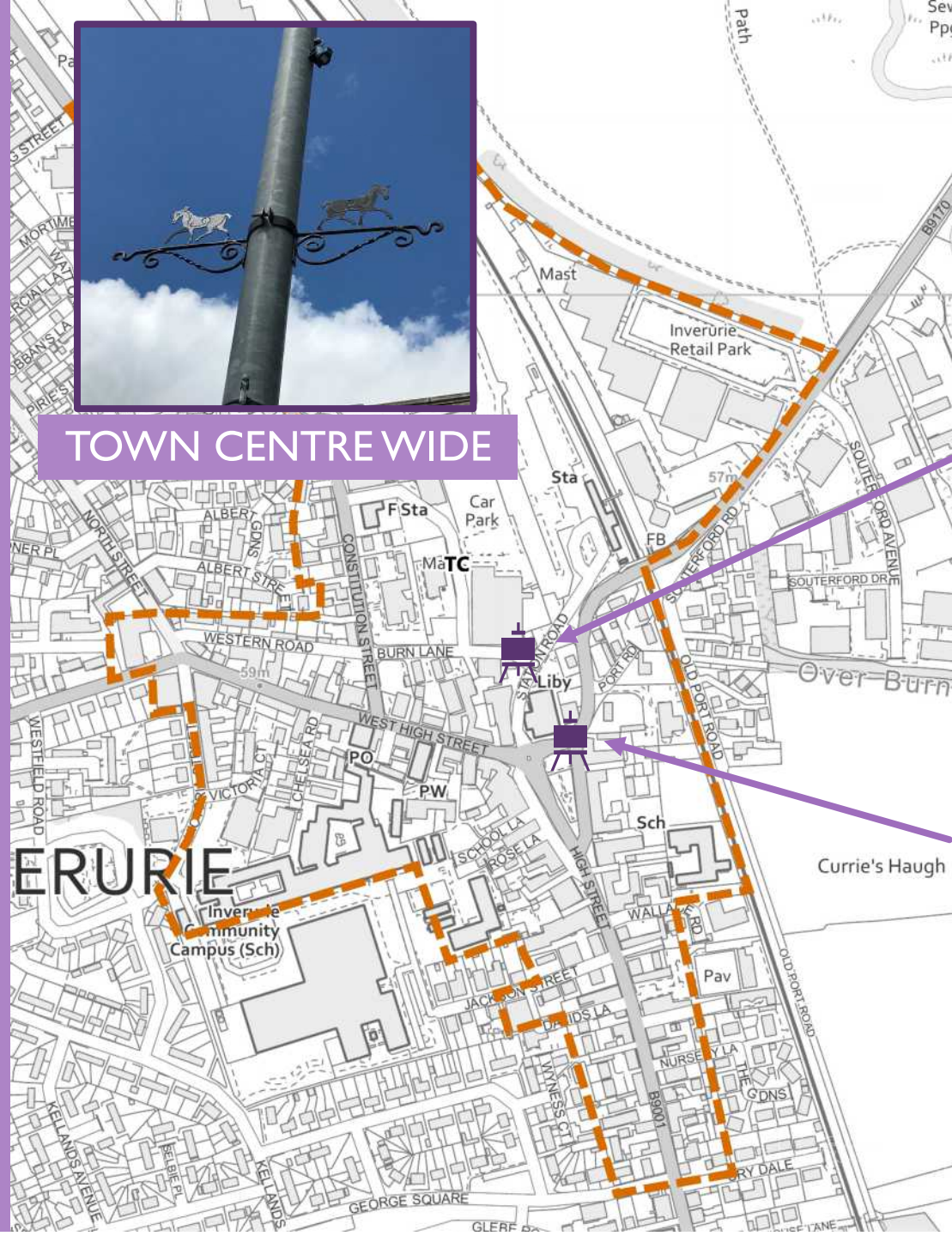
Observations: There is a good distribution of public art all in good condition throughout the town centre, which adds to the attractiveness of the area.

The horses on the street lights represent the Inverurie Horse which was found on a site near Inverurie and is the only recorded example of a horse carved into a Pictish symbol stone.

The sculpture at Burn Lane is named The Salmon above the Flood. The Picts placed a stone carved with a salmon in the River Dee at its safest crossing point. When the salmon could be seen the ford was passable and when not visible it was too deep to cross. The sculpture was designed by Alison Simpson in 2003 to depict this story.



TOWN CENTRE WIDE



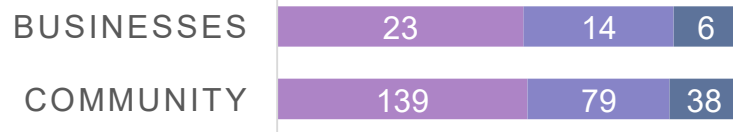
Images (Top to Bottom): The Salmon above the Flood Station Road and Meter Box The Square Car Park.



STREETS & SPACES: PAVEMENTS

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: PAVEMENT CLEANLINESS?

■ 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.”

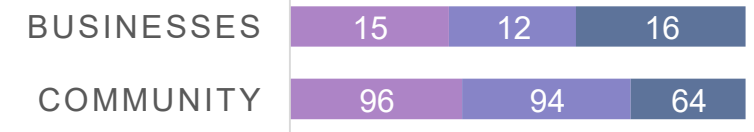
Business and Community Survey, July 2021

Observations: The scoring through the 2021 survey for both quality and cleanliness of pavements 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 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.”

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

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 were 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. However, it should be noted that the site is allocated within the Local Development Plan 2023 for a mix of uses including housing and retail uses.

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.”

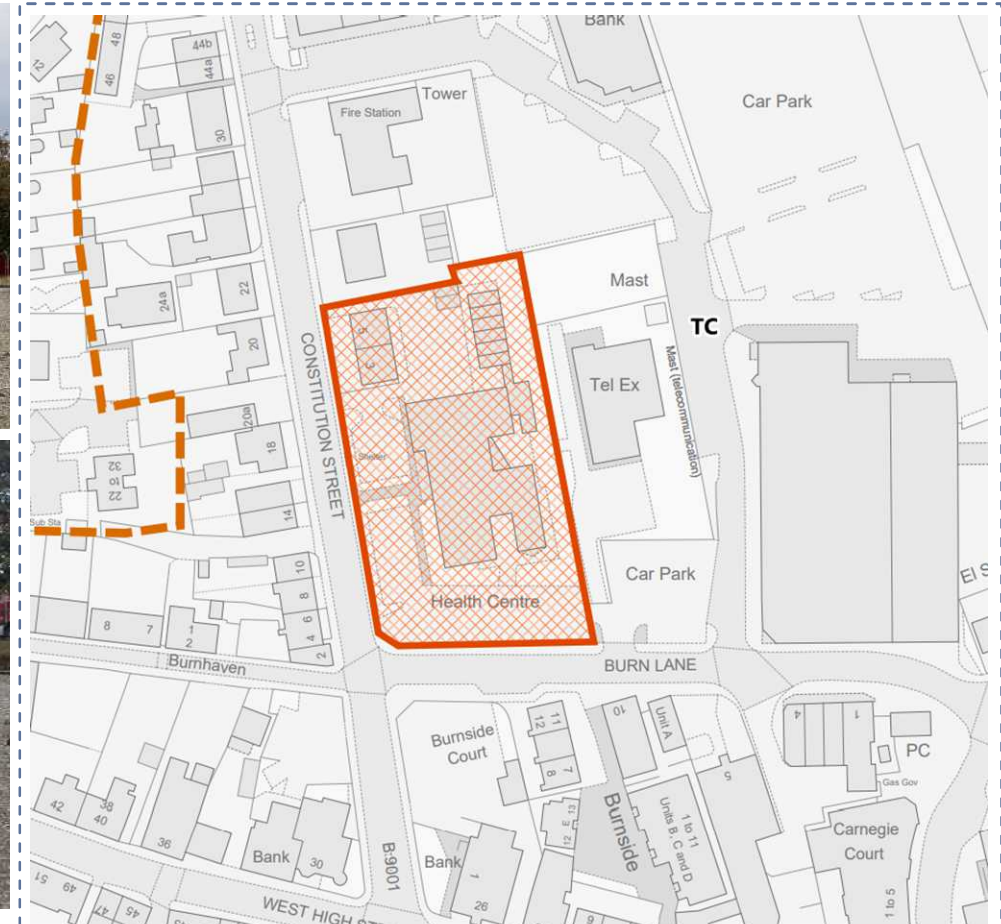
“Turn the old Inverurie Health Centre site into a green, communal space.”

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

“The old health centre is an eye sore.”

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

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

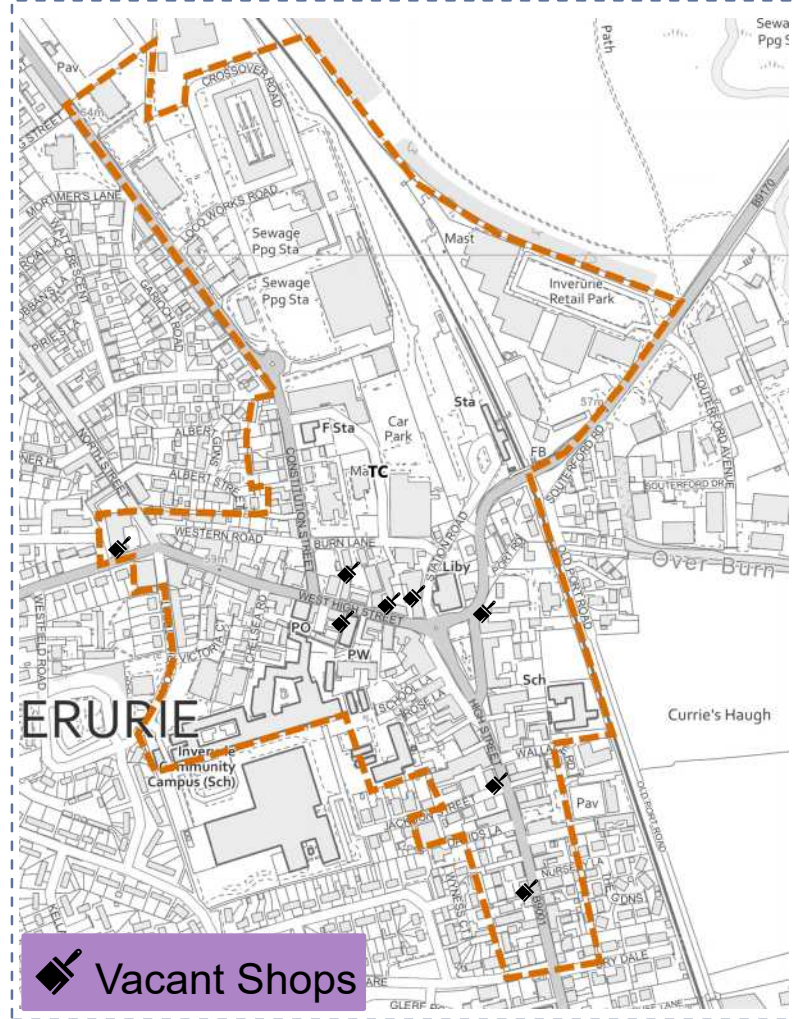


Images: Former Medical Centre Site, Constitution Street.

STREETS & SPACES: VACANT RETAIL UNITS



Observations: The number of vacant units within the town centre is low with a 5.5% vacancy rate which is significantly lower than the Scottish average at the time of the survey, Q3 2022, which is 15.7% (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 2021 community 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 with them either being under offer or planning applications submitted.



Images (Top Left and Clockwise): Station Road, West High Street and Market Place.

Vacant Retail Units

8 Vacant Units in the town centre

5.5% Vacancy Rate at time of survey

"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."

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

◆ Vacant Shops

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.

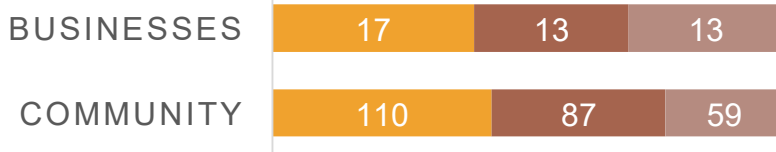
NATURAL SPACE



Observations: There is little in the way of public open space within the town centre, and this was recognised in the surveys in 2021. It was one of the bottom five aspects of the town in the business survey and commented on by many across both surveys. On a positive note, opportunities have been taken to add greenery to the area where possible, with planters, hanging baskets, verges and the memorial area all being well maintained and are an attractive feature within the town centre.

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." Business and Community Survey, July 2021



Harlaw Road: Wide tree-lined verges



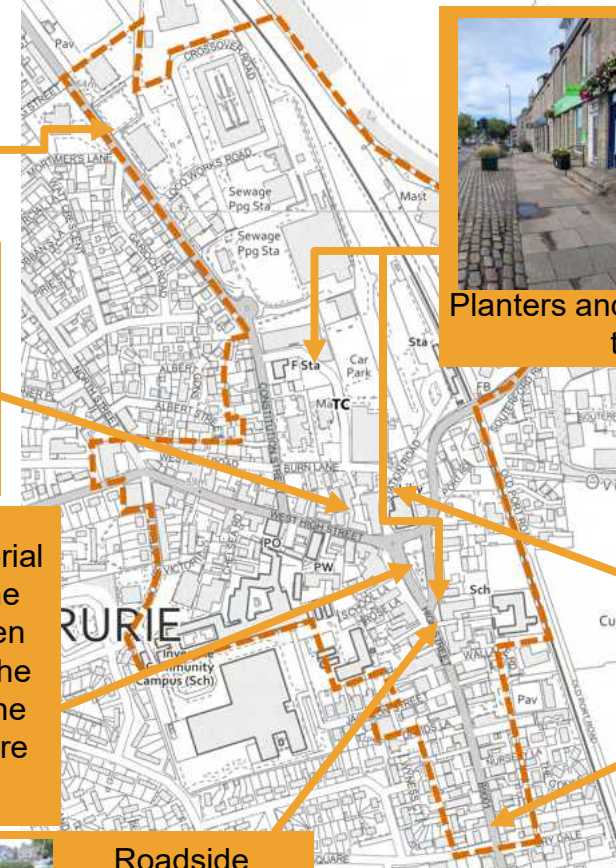
Pedestrianised area could be improved with enhanced landscaping



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



Roadside planting provides a green boundary between cars and pedestrians



Planters and hanging baskets at various locations throughout the town centre



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

Inverurie Environmental Improvement 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.

Good public places and facilities 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.

PLAY & RECREATION



Observations: Inverurie has few play and recreation sites within the town centre itself, and this is reflected in the comments received to the 2021 survey responses. Comments focused on a lack of opportunities for young people. Additionally, there are a number of play/ leisure facilities within one mile of the town centre. 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 & AMENITIES: RETAILER REPRESENTATION

Retailer Representation

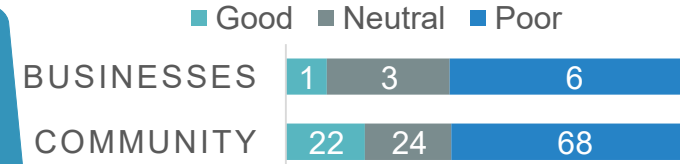
46% of businesses in the town centre are independent retailers

55% of businesses in the town centre are Class 1: Shops

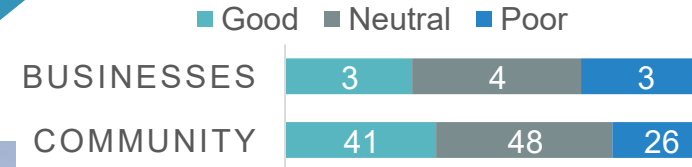
18% of businesses in the town centre are Class 2: Financial, Professional and other services



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VARIETY OF SHOPS?



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: QUALITY OF SHOPS?



“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.”



Observations: Inverurie has a strong retail focus with a great mix of independent and multiple retailers within each Use Class providing a range of shops. Through the 2021 community survey it was evident from the comments received that there were 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.

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: CAFÉ AND RESTAURANTS

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CAFÉ/ RESTAURANT CHOICE?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: CAFÉ/ RESTAURANT QUALITY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



“More cafés.”

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

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

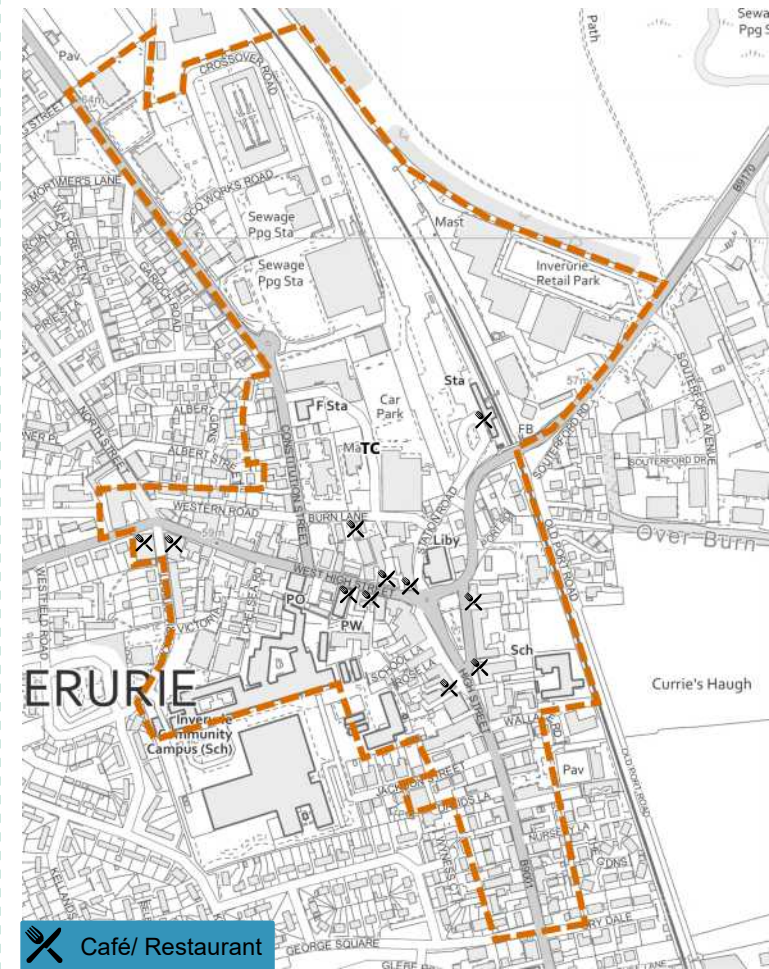
“There is only one café where you can sit outside.”

“Good variety of cafés and restaurants.”

“Lack of café culture.”

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

Observations: Through the 2021 community survey a number of comments were received relating to the opening hours of the cafés. 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 cafés.



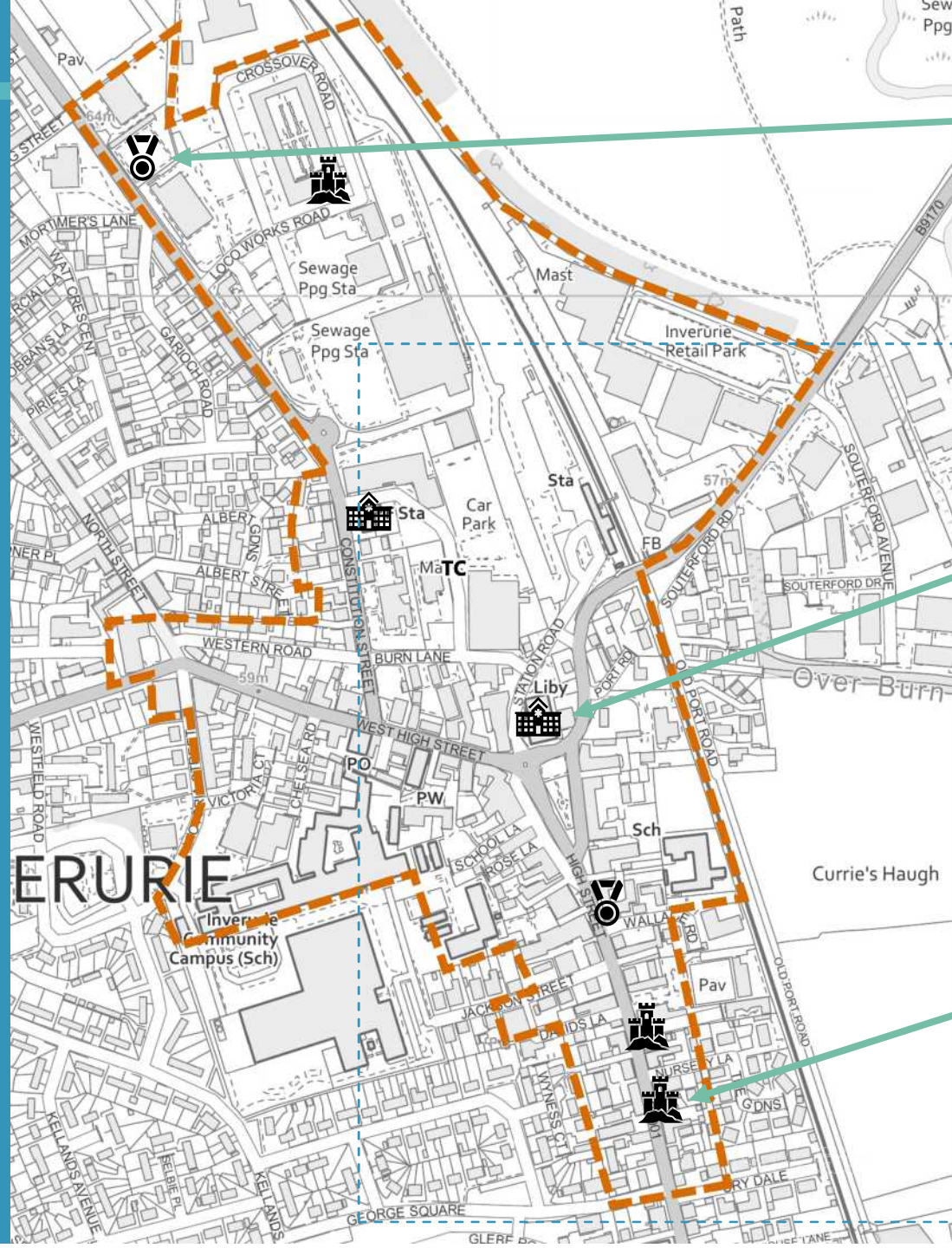
Café/ Restaurant

Images (Top to Bottom): Via Roma, High Street and Fennel, Burn Lane.

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

BUSINESSES	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.”*

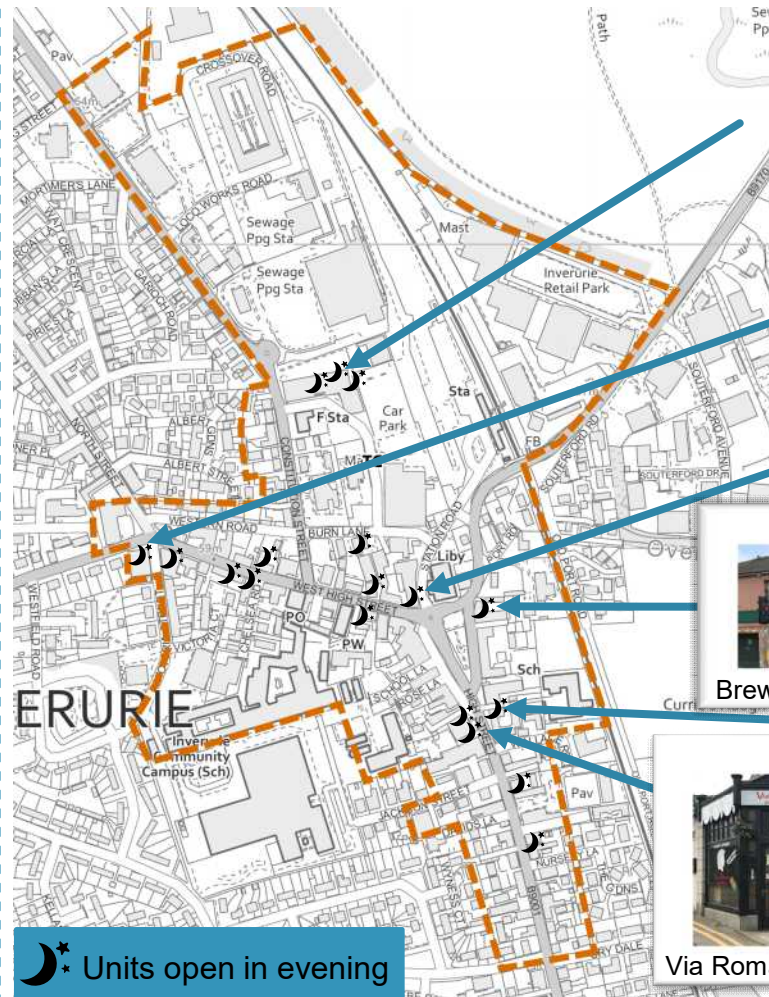
*“Residents are offered little by way of variety or
evening activities other than eat or drink.”*

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

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

Observations: There are a large number of takeaway units within the town centre which open into the evening along with the 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 2021 community survey.



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



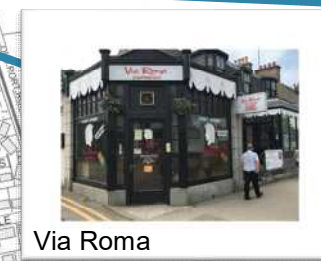
The Drouthy Laird



Edwards



Brewdog



Via Roma

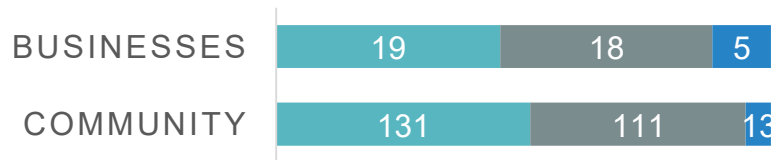


Spice of Life

FACILITIES & AMENITIES: COMMUNITY AND VISITOR SATISFACTION

HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VALUE FOR MONEY?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor



“The variety of items sold in café/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.”

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

Town Centre Offer:

76%

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

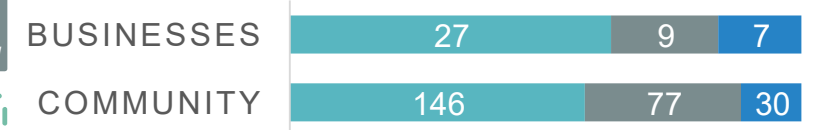
Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Observations: The standard of service in shops was ranked as the second highest ranked question in both the 2021 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 aim to be maintained for future years.

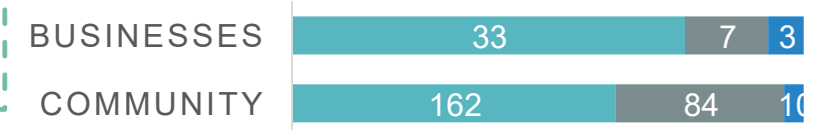
HOW WOULD YOU RATE: VARIETY OF GOODS AVAILABLE?

■ 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

7,134 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.”

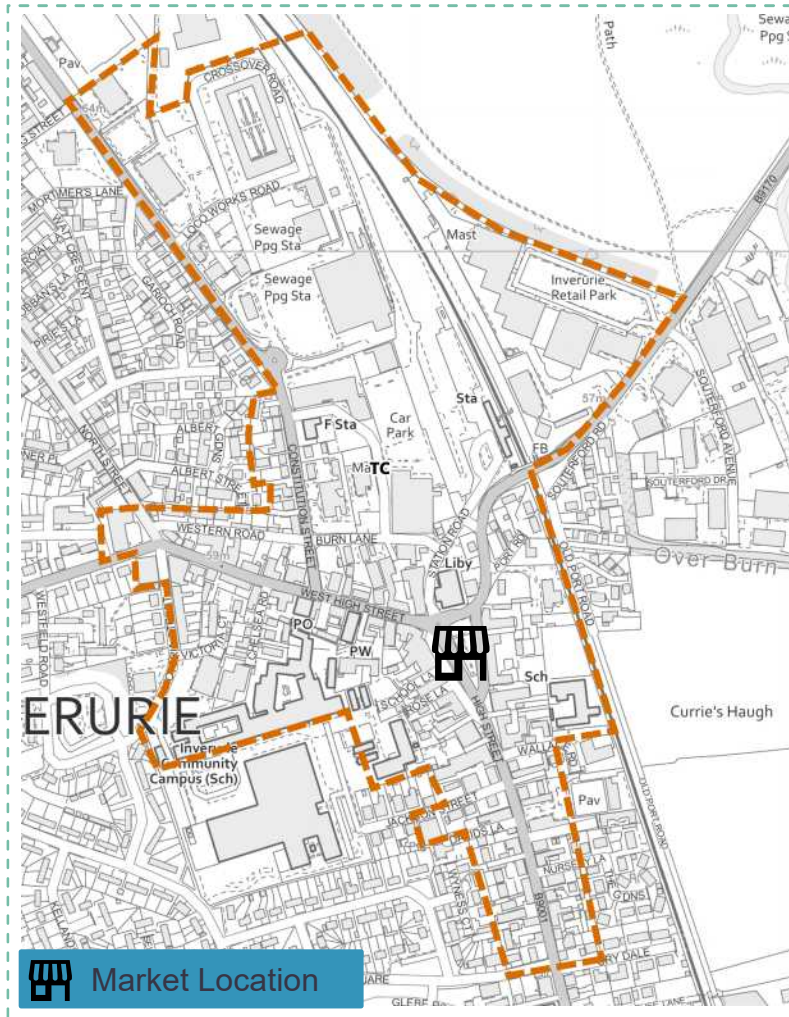
“Better promotion of the Farmers market is needed.”

“Good idea to have a permeant 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.”

Business and Community Survey, July 2021



HOW WOULD YOU RATE: THE MARKET?

■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Poor

BUSINESSES	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 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 were 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.

Business and Community Survey, September 2021

Observations: There was a real mix in responses to the questions about shopping online within the 2021 community survey. A number of respondents noted that they would rather shop local than buy 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.”

Business and Community Survey, July 2021



Image: Burn Lane.



FACILITIES & AMENITIES: CONNECTIVITY







Observations: Mobile coverage within Inverurie Town Centre is very strong with all of the top networks being accessible at a 4G level and the O2 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:	72.5 Mbps
	Upload:	20.4 Mbps

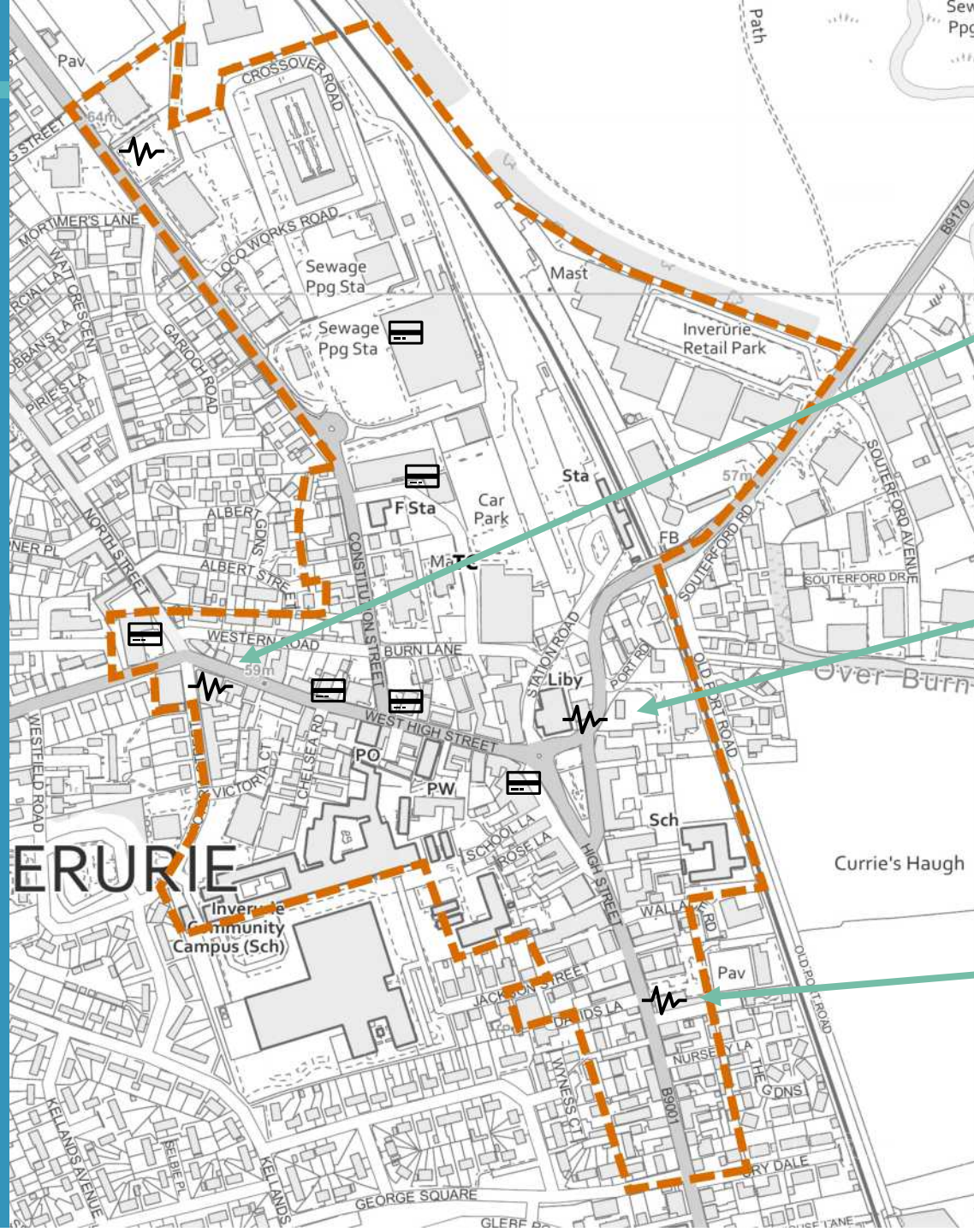
Mobile Coverage in Inverurie Town Centre:

		Voice	3G	4G	5G
Three	Indoor	✓	✓	✓	✗
	Outdoor	✓	✓	✓	✗
O2	Indoor	✓	✓	✓	5G AREA
	Outdoor	✓	✓	✓	5G AREA
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 four 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, one to the south of High Street and the fourth located at the Bowling Green on Harlaw Road.



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.

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. This has now decreased in levels and is below the rate seen in 2018.

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

Median Household Income 2021
Town Centre Data Zone
£32,985

£44,962 Garioch; £36,889 Aberdeenshire

Source: © CACI Limited 1996 - 2021 This report shall be used solely for academic, personal and/or non-commercial purposes.

WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY

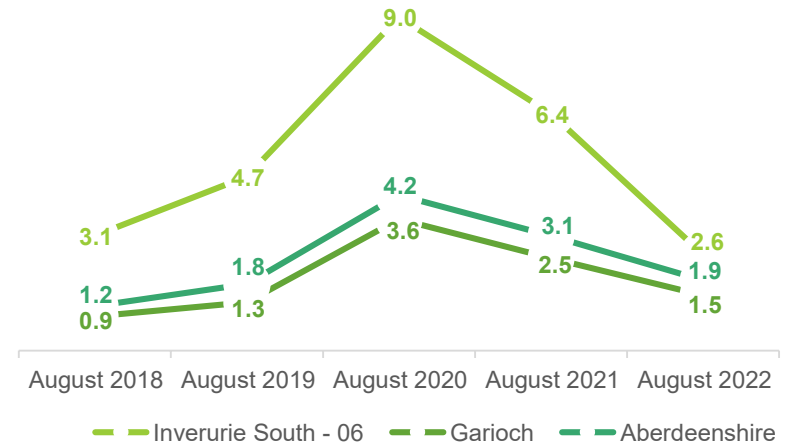


Top 5 Employment Sectors 2021 Inverurie Town Centre Data Zone*



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey 2021

CLAIMANT COUNT RATE^ (%)



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

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020
Town Centre Data Zone*:
40-45% Least deprived in Scotland

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

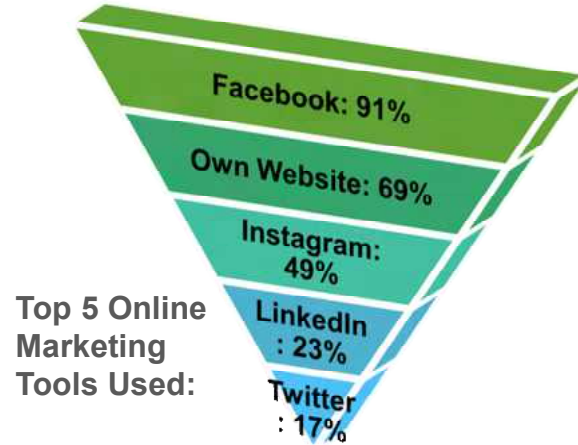
WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY: BUSINESS SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS 2021

Observations: 43 businesses responded to the survey in 2021 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.

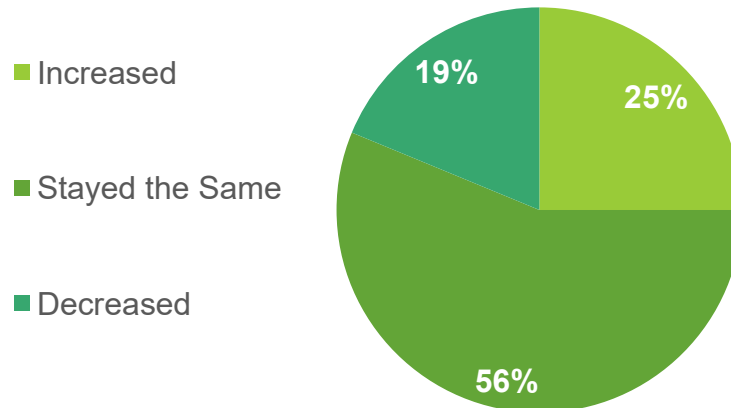
- 82%** of business owners surveyed were **established** businesses in the town centre. **12%** were ready to sell/retire; **6%** were start-ups
- 86%** of business owners surveyed were **Independent** businesses
- 66%** of business owners surveyed were either **confident** or **extremely confident** about future business performance in Inverurie
- 19%** of business owners surveyed were looking to **grow** or **expand** in the next year, with a further **19%** in the next five years. **61%** were **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."

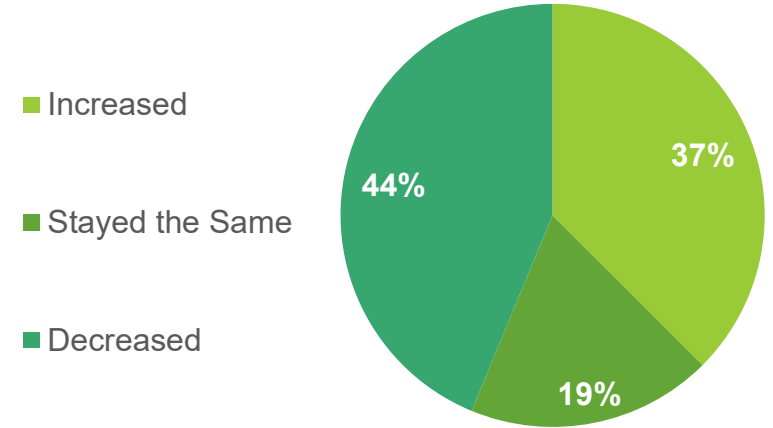
Business and Community Survey, July 2021



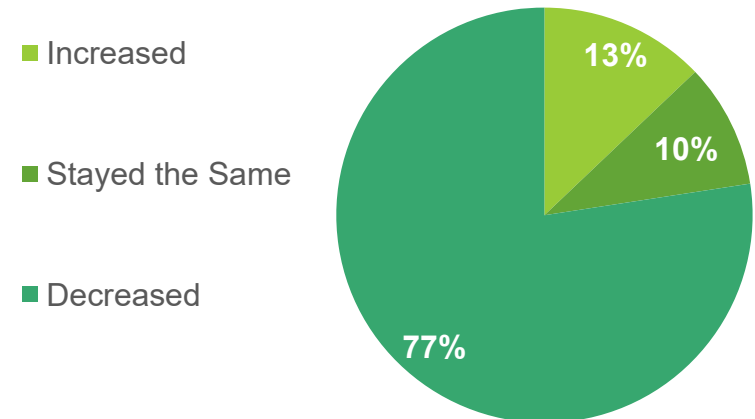
Has employment at your premises changed in the past five years?



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



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



WORK & LOCAL ECONOMY:

PROPERTY

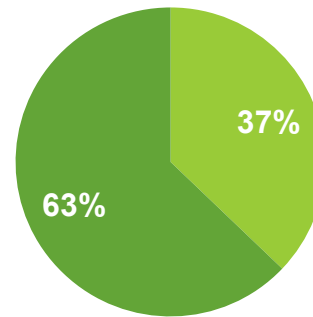
Observations: The commercial property market is fairly stable in Inverurie, perhaps due to the large number of established businesses as indicated in the business survey. This was echoed in the number of businesses who owned their own premises in 2021. There was also a reasonably bright outlook for investment in town centre stock, with nearly a third confirming they were 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.

Planning Applications:

Within the town centre 13 planning applications were approved between August 2021 – August 2022. Of note were:

- 2 x Change of use from Class 1 Retail to Class 3 Restaurant/café;
- Alterations and Change of Use of Offices (Class 4) to 6 B&B rooms (Class 7), including retention of 1 Office;
- Change of Use from Class 1 (Shop) to Class 2 (Financial);
- 4 for signage;
- Installation of Trolley Shelter and Associated Alterations to Car Park;
- Change of Use and Alterations and Extension of Former Store (Class 4) to Form Dwellinghouse (Class 9).

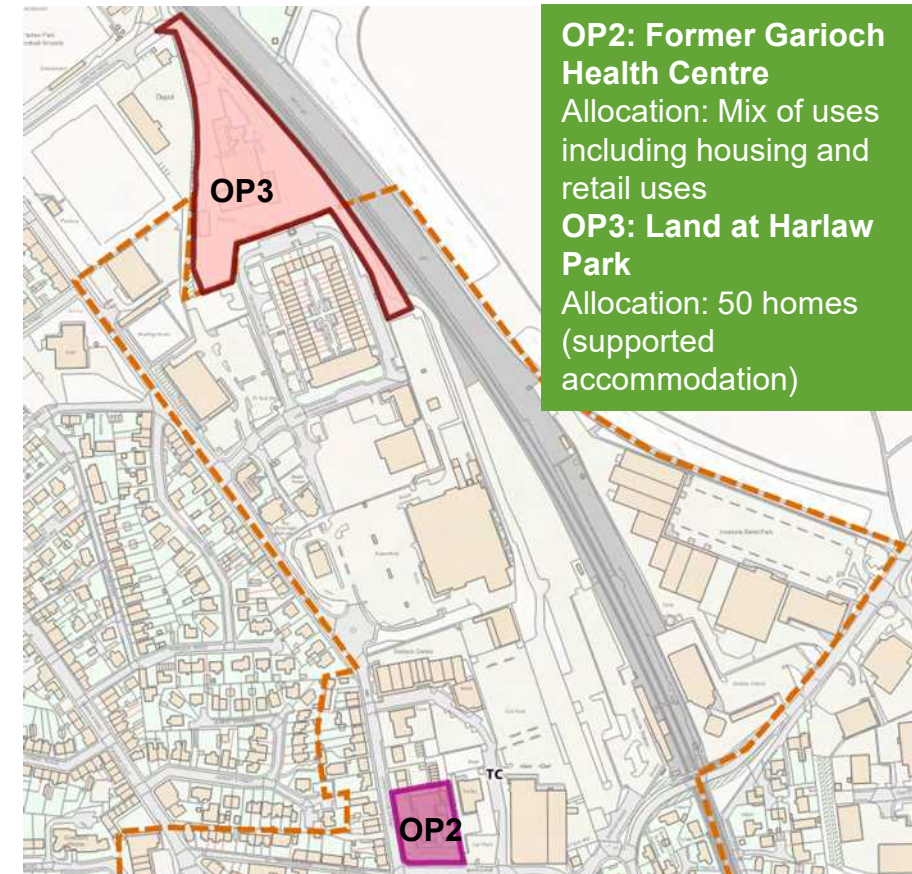
Do you rent or own your premises?



■ 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: Former Garioch Health Centre

Allocation: Mix of uses including housing and retail uses

OP3: Land at Harlaw Park

Allocation: 50 homes (supported accommodation)

“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.”

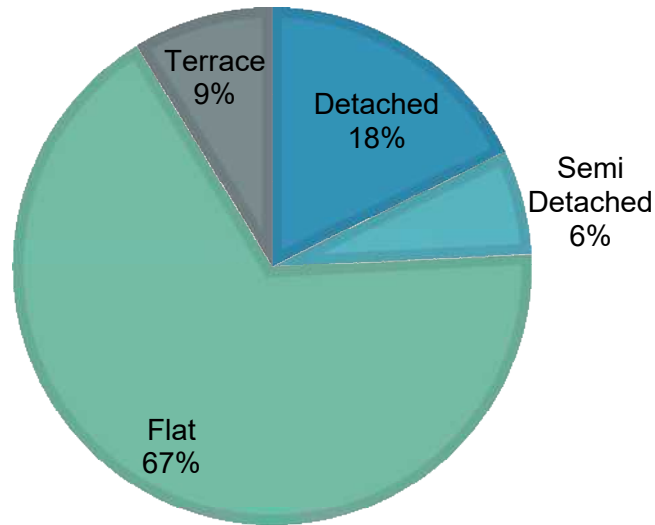
Business and Community Survey, July 2021

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



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.

Housing Profile and Population

The overall population total for Inverurie in 2020 was 14,660 and it is estimated that approximately 851 people stay within the town centre.

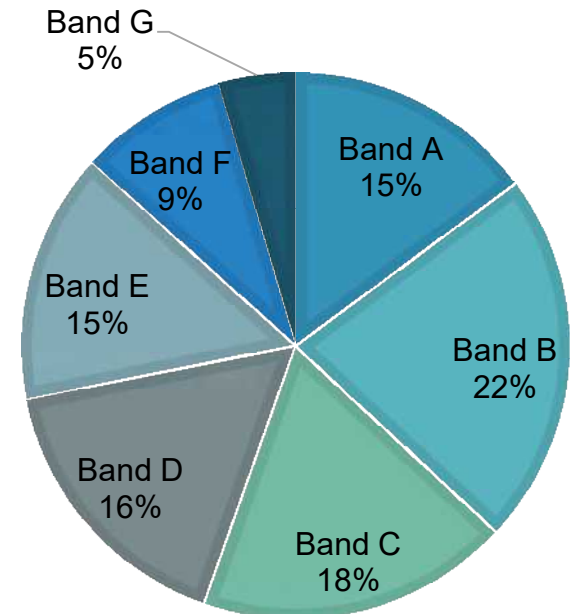
The average house price for dwellings within the town centre boundary in 2018 was £183,250 compared with the average house price in Aberdeenshire of £230,038.



Image: Loco Works Residential Development.

In terms of Council Tax Bands (2021), 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

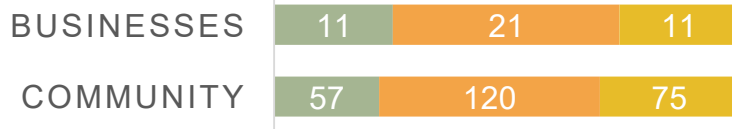


Feeling isolated can be damaging to our health and wellbeing. Good places provide a variety of spaces to meet and spend time with others.

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 2021 surveys. 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 2023:

Farmers Market

09:00-13:00 – Every second Saturday

*Not an exhaustive list ^Correct at time of survey

SOCIAL INTERACTION



Venue	Indoor / Outdoor	Opening Times*
Town Hall	Indoor	Every day but booking essential
West Church	Indoor	Sun 11:00
Library	Indoor	Tues & Wed 09:00 – 17:30 Thurs 10:00 - 19:00 Sat 10:00 – 14:00 Click and Collect also available when open
Garioch Heritage Centre	Indoor	Thurs – Sun 10:00-16:00
Play Town	Indoor	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri, Sat & Sun 09:30 – 17:00 Wed 09:30 – 13:00
Gospel Hall	Indoor	Sun 10:15 Breaking of Bread Sun 11:00 Family Service Sun 18:00 Bible Study

“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.”

Business and Community Survey, July 2021

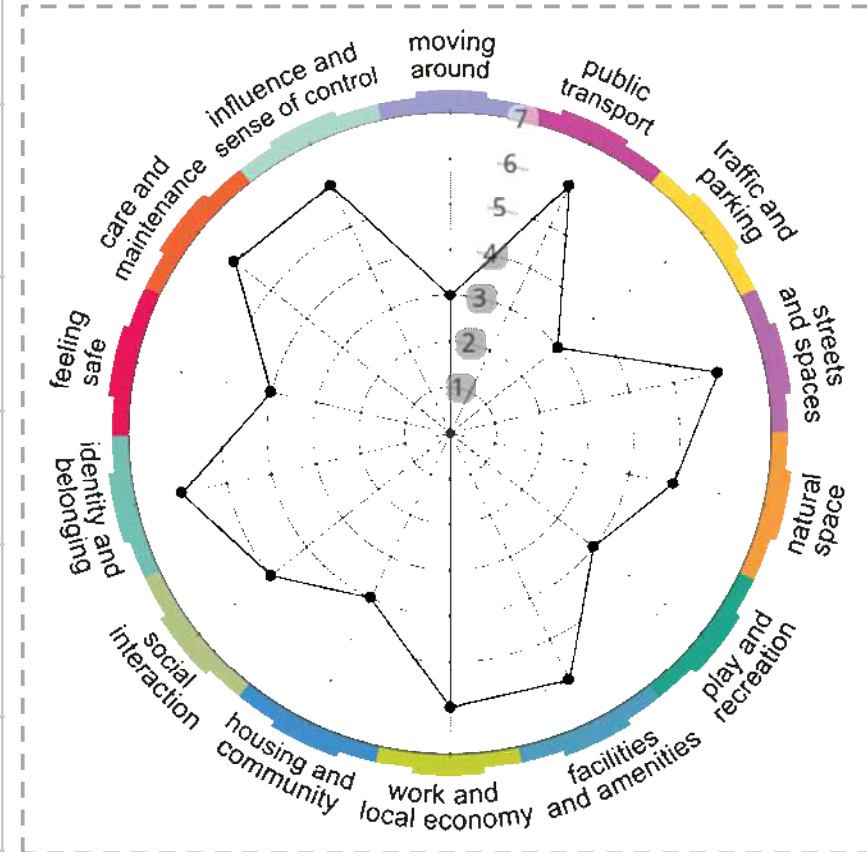


Images: Left, Garioch Heritage Centre; Right, Inverurie Gospel Hall.

* Correct at time of survey.

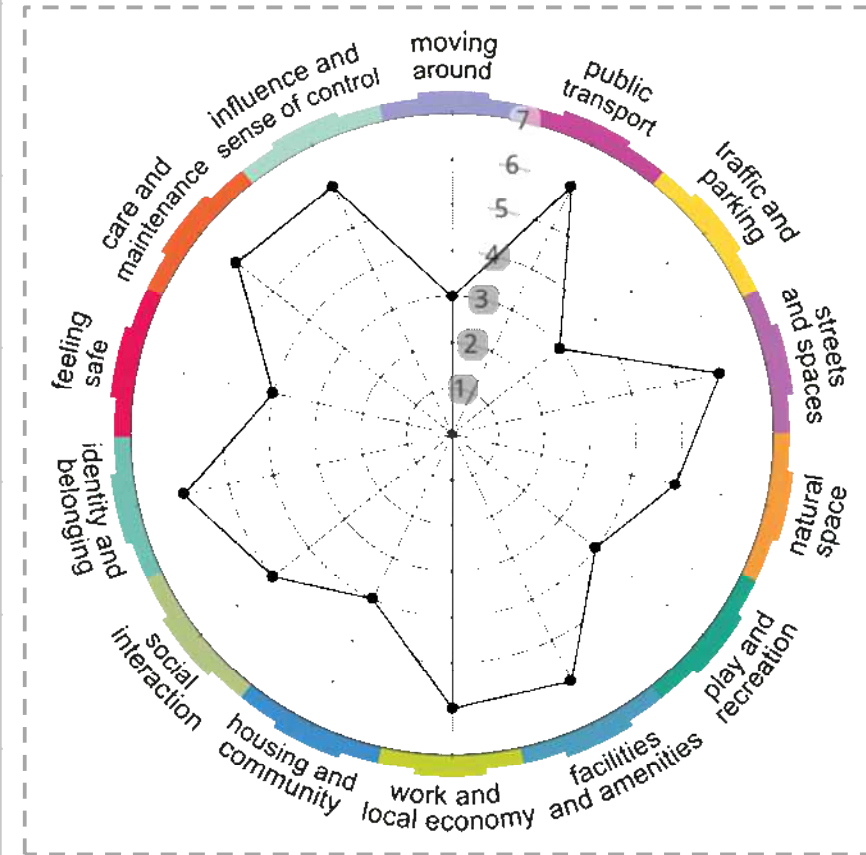
KEY CONSIDERATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

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:

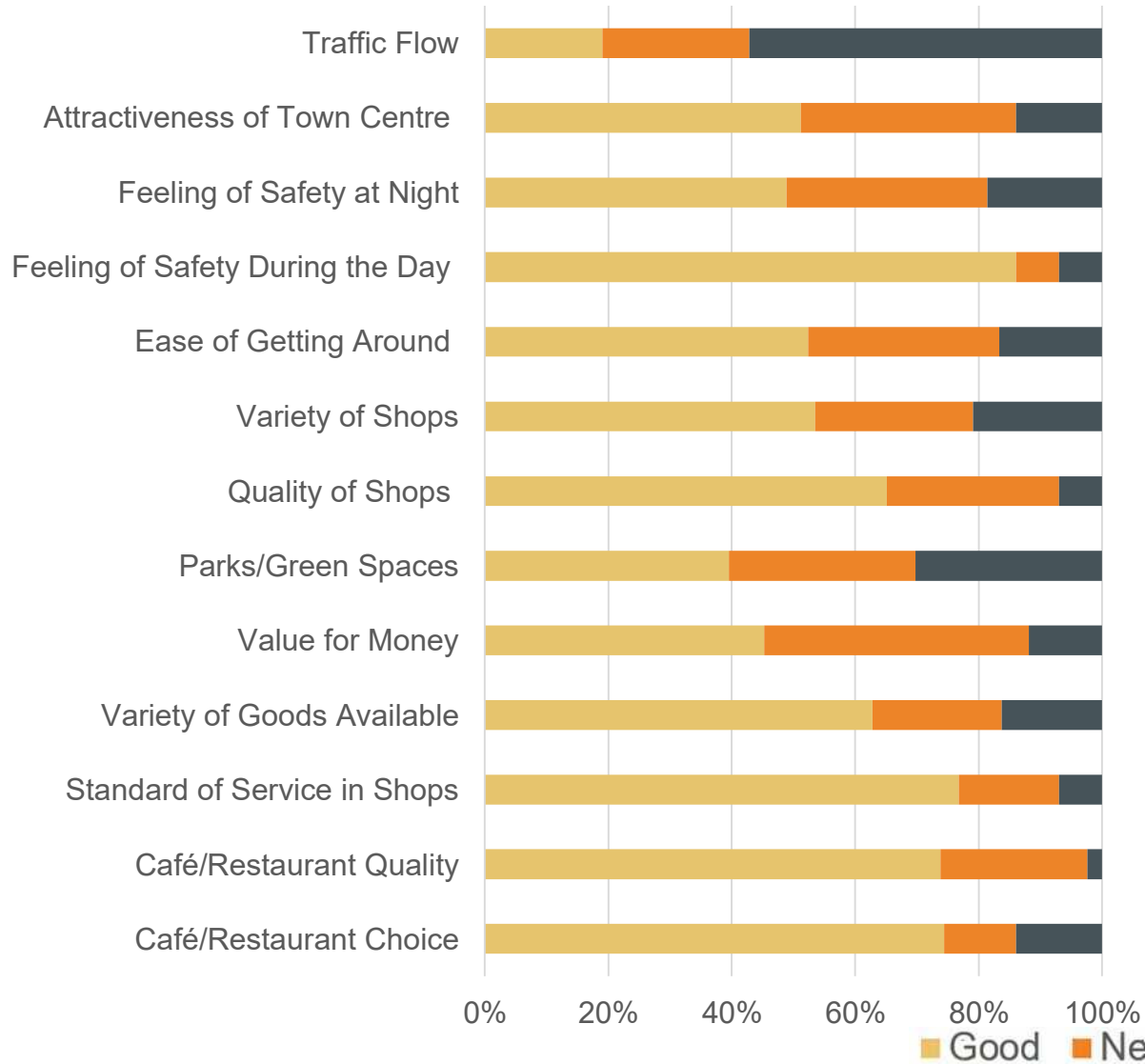
1. Feeling of Safety During the Day
2. Standard of Service in Shops
3. Café/ Restaurant Choice
4. Café/ Restaurant Quality
5. Quality of Shops

Top 5 Lowest Scoring Categories:

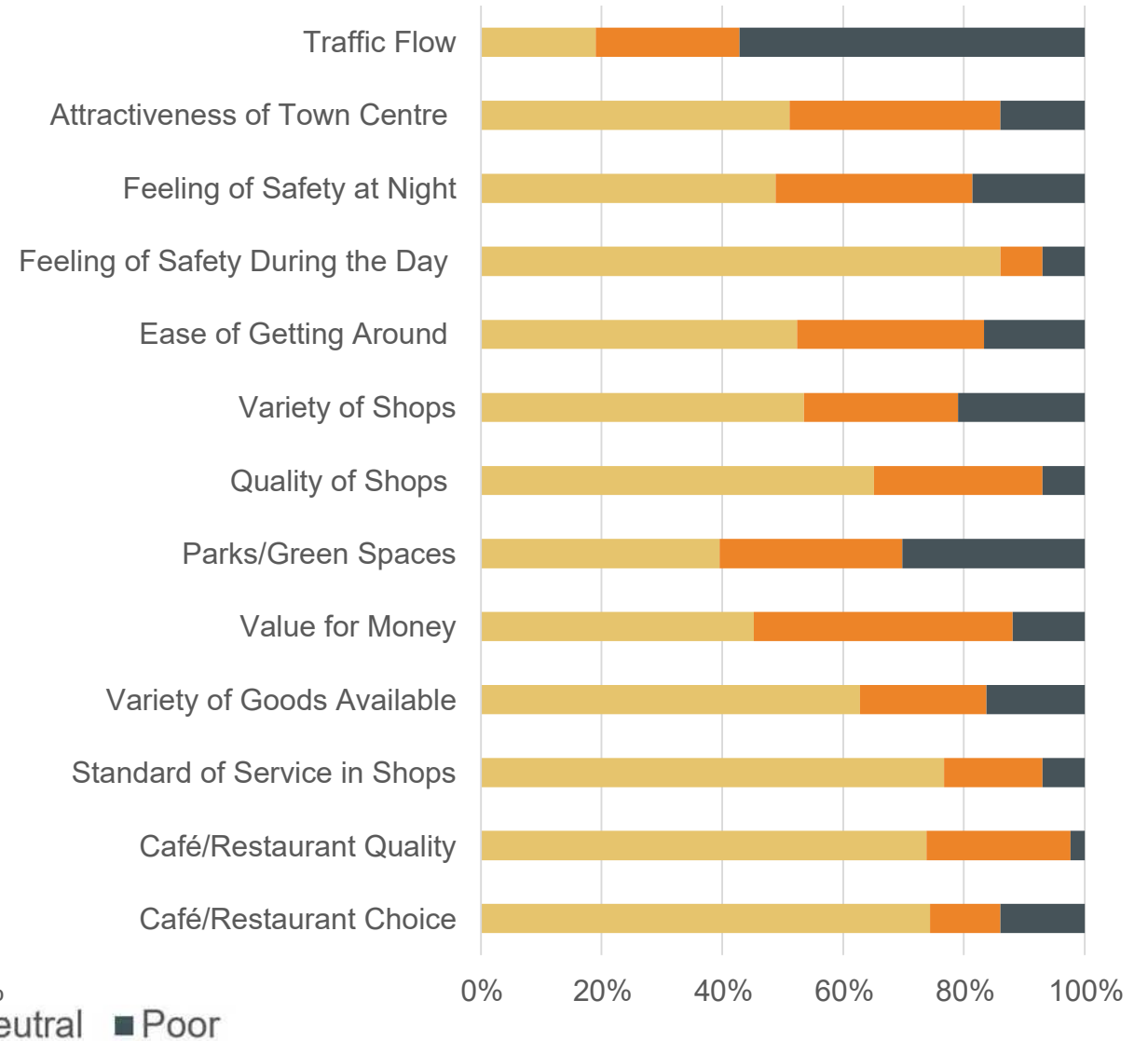
1. Traffic
- =2. Parking Space Availability: Cars
- =2. Seating/ Areas to Congregate
3. Parking Affordability: Cars
4. Pavement Quality

BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate?

Community Responses:

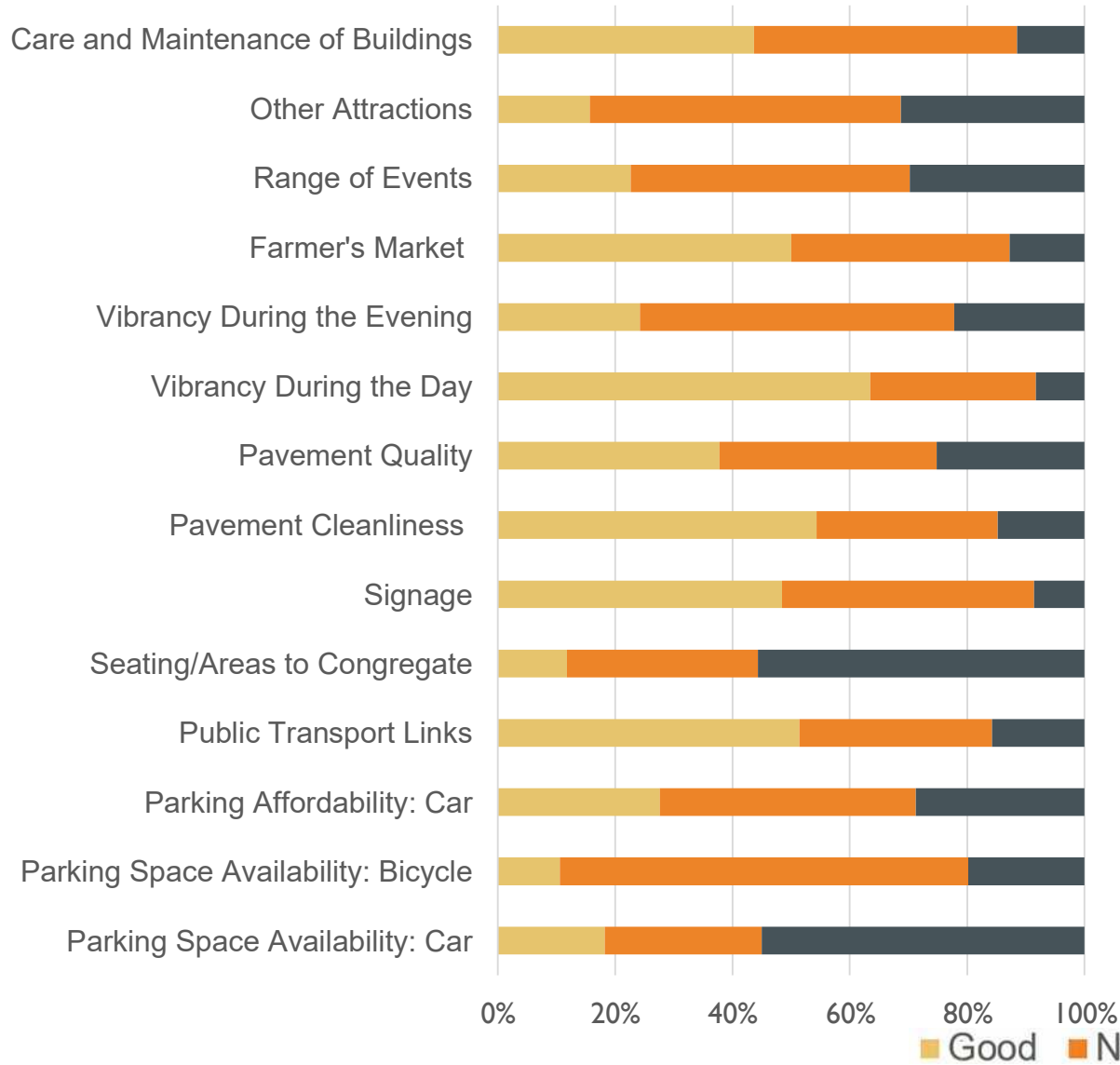


Business Responses:

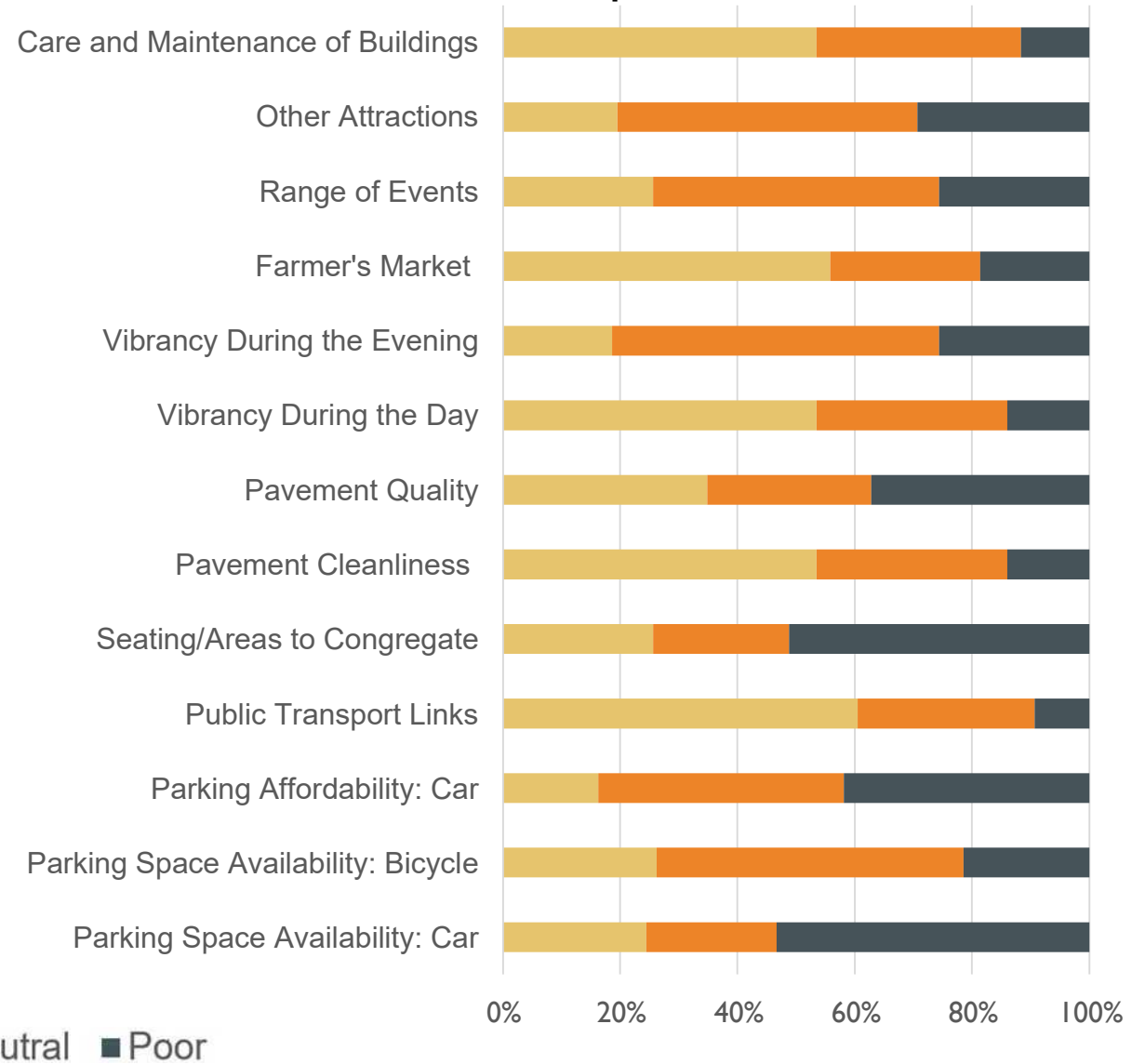


BUSINESS & COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSES: How Would You Rate?

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 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 in 2021 and 2022 for their contributions to the project:

Business and Community:

Derek Ritchie, We Are Inverurie BID

Inverurie Community Council

Local Ward Members

Footfall Count Volunteers

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

Partner Organisations:

Sergeant Walker, Partnerships, Preventions and Interventions, 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 2022

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

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