



PRESS RELEASE - immediate release

3rd December 2018

Potential loss of free 30-minute off-street parking – A challenge for Inverurie High Street

The Inverurie Business Association (IBA), which represents the local businesses within Inverurie and its surrounding area, has today voiced concerns about Aberdeenshire Council's proposed review of off-street car parking tariffs, part of which may include replacing the free 30-minute parking with a parking charge.

Supporting the retail businesses in the town is key to the IBA, and the potential loss of the free car parking in the town could have a negative impact on the town's retail trade.

Ian Sinclair, We Are Inverurie, Inverurie's Business Improvement District (BID) Chairman said about the news: "With High Streets struggling to compete with online shopping, it's important for the shops that people are encouraged to come to the town – doing away with the free parking charges can only have a negative impact."

Given that the Inverurie off-street council parking generates a surplus under the current short-term free parking arrangement, the IBA were surprised to learn of the proposal being considered by Aberdeenshire Council. The IBA are questioning as to why Inverurie is being penalised for the town's success in both encouraging visitors to the town and for also generating additional parking revenue.

Victoria Withy, IBA Chairperson stated: "The IBA is disappointed as we feel that removing the free parking tariff in the town will send a negative message to people throughout in the area who want to shop locally and support local businesses. There is also the risk of changing shopping behaviour and driving people away from local towns to out-of-centre shopping centres offering free parking or to online shopping."

She continued: "Towns who want to emulate Inverurie's success in attracting visitors with 30-minute free parking will have a greater task on their hands if no free parking is available."

During a time when high streets are struggling to attract business the IBA would like to recommend that everything be done to encourage local shopping throughout Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeenshire Council will be voting on the proposal in January and the IBA await the outcome and hope that Aberdeenshire Council will take into consideration the economic and commercial impact that this proposal could have on local business.

ENDS.

Media Contact: Victoria Withy, Chair – IBA and Hayley Yule, Vice Chair at invbizco@gmail.com or on TELEPHONE

NOTES TO EDITORS

A recently issued report, published by Aberdeenshire Council on the 29 November 2018, "Review of off-street parking in Aberdeenshire" highlights there has been a significant impact on Aberdeenshire Council revenue with the introduction of free tariffs in December 2014.

Before the revised tariffs were introduced the income from car parking charges was £100k to £200k greater than all of the expenditure on car parks. That situation changed to one where the position was reversed.

The report goes on to say that prior to the introduction of the free tariffs there were approximately 800k transactions annually in our car parks. This has risen to 1.3 million transactions in 2017/18. However, of the 1.3 million transactions approximately 80% were free.

The Revenue budget, approved by Aberdeenshire Council, set the budget for Car Parks at zero, i.e. total expenditure should match total income, and that therefore to balance the budget a significant change in income is required. As a consequence, Aberdeenshire Council are to consider a proposal to remove the current 30-minute parking and re-introduce parking tariff in its place.

ABOUT THE IBA

The IBA aims to promote and help all businesses in Inverurie and the surrounding area 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 can quickly react to issues that affect you by speaking directly to local and national Government on behalf of the business community.

The IBA offers regular opportunities for Members to meet through networking events with expert speakers on a wide range of topics offering advice and assistance.

Our mission is simple: Working together better.

<https://www.weareinverurie.co.uk/inverurie-business-association>

ABOUT WE ARE INVERURIE

Inverurie and 'We Are Inverurie' represents the interests of companies and retailers – Big And Small – In Scotland's Fastest Growing Town. We'd like everyone to get Involved in the town – helping to keep it at the forefront of Aberdeenshire towns as a desirable place to work, live, play and do business in.

<http://www.weareinverurie.co.uk>