

ELGIN CITY CENTRE CAR PARKING REPORT

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Section 1.0

Introduction

This report has been compiled by Elgin BID in response to the concerns raised over the last 18 months from the business community in the City Centre, and shoppers, that the car parking charges increase in Elgin in early 2010 has had a detrimental effect on trade in the City Centre.

Previously car parking charges in Elgin were: 60p for up to 1 hour now £1.00 (a rise of 66%), £1.00 for up to 2 hours now £1.50 (a rise of 50%), £1.80 for 2 – 4 hours now £3.40 (a rise of 89%) and £3.00 for 4 – 10 hours now £4.00 (a rise of 33%)

The findings which are based on primary and secondary research will show that there is indeed strong correlation between car parking charges and shopping habits and preferences.

The main primary research has been gathered from on line surveys which were carried out with BID businesses, the general public via Facebook and through one City Centre business – Pizzeria Toscana with their customers. A total of 103 responses were received within 7 days and the results are summarised in the findings sections (section 2.0)

There are clear similarities from the comments between the surveys in relation to parking charges being too high and either discouraging people from coming into the City Centre or reducing the length of time people will stay in the centre and use the facilities. The car parking ticket sales for 2010 also backs this up with a significant decrease in sales for longer stay parking.

This report contains recommendations to Moray Council (**at section 4.0**) which, it is hoped they will consider and these are derived from the evidence gathered.

1.1 Background

Town centres play a large part in our local communities and are increasingly becoming a place not only for retail shopping but as a place for leisure activity. The events which Elgin BID has held over the last 12 months have proved that people will come into their town centres for entertainment and leisure as much as retail. However, high parking charges are creating a barrier to people coming in and spending time in Elgin (as the survey results will show). Since the charges increased shopping habits are now largely described as a *'trolley dash'* with many people getting what they want and then going home as quickly as possible to avoid paying parking charges or having to pay more than £1.00. This is backed up by the many comments received from the surveys and the most recent figures on ticket sales.

These figures show that there has been an increase in ticket sales of up to 1 hour of 73,188 (2010) compared with the same period in 2009 (April – March) however, there has been a reduction of 79,460 in ticket sales for up to 2 hour period and 23,647 in the 2 – 4 hour period. (See Appendix 1). Clearly people are not spending time in Elgin City Centre.

The retail parks in Elgin are accused of taking trade away from the City Centre, one the reasons being that parking is free there. We are not seeing a level playing field. In addition, the recent decision by

Moray Council to approve the application by British Lands to remove the bulky goods restriction at Springfield Retail Park places even more pressure on an already struggling City Centre.

It's true that it cannot be claimed that higher parking charges are solely to blame for struggling trade and this report does not claim that this is the case. However, high car parking charges do create a barrier which in this climate of recession and lower disposable income will only serve to put more pressure on an already struggling City Centre. Surely if there are ways within the power and control of the local authority to relieve this pressure, this should be done.

Section 2.0

2.1 Findings - Secondary Research

There is significant amount of data about the affect the introduction and/or increase in parking charges can have on Town Centres and the link between parking charges and a vibrant town centre.

In this section we will refer to a selection of these bodies of research however, there are many more articles indicating that car parking charges can be a significant contributor to the survival or other wise of the Town Centres.

This section is made up largely of secondary data and research while section 2.2 will focus on the results of the primary research (the surveys) and feedback from community groups including Elgin South Area Forum and Elgin Community Council.

2.1.1 Comparison of car parking charges locally:

Springfield Retail Park and other Moray Towns

In Moray, none of the other town car parks charge for parking and this has been commented on by a number of respondents to the surveys. Why would shoppers then come to Elgin City Centre and pay for parking when they can shop in any other town in Moray and not pay? Springfield Retail Park is free to park and this similarly will draw more and more shoppers to that part of the town. Comments from respondents to the consumer survey use this as a reason for shopping at the out of town parks and elsewhere rather than paying to park in Elgin City Centre.

Inverness car parking charges:

One of the main reasons for the development of Elgin BID was to reduce the leakage of shoppers from Elgin to Inverness. In recent years we have seen a dramatic growth of Inverness who is now able to offer a wide and varied selection of shops and leisure activities for most consumers. Elgin has failed to keep up with this growth of our closest neighbour and main rival however, it is hoped that over the next 4 years the work of Elgin BID and others will make a difference in improving the public perception of Elgin and attract inward investment back into our City Centre. **Not only can Inverness offer more to the consumer, the parking charges in all car parks are cheaper than Elgin.** The car parks in Inverness vary in cost but as an example (taking a 2 hour period which would offer a more leisurely shopping experience) you are able to park in Eastgate Centre for £2.00 for 4 hours – the parking in Eastgate has recently been restructured (January) to encourage longer dwell times. Strothers lane car park similarly charges £2.00 for 4 hours. **This is approx. 58% cheaper than the current 2 -4 hour rate in Elgin.** The Rose Street car park currently charges £1.50 for up to 4 hours. As

the time increases the charges reduce in comparison with up to 6 hours for £3.00 in Strothers Lane and Eastgate Centre. ***Copy of the parking structures in 3 main Inverness city centre car parks can be found at Appendix 2.***

One of the main drivers based on the growing trend of High Streets as a leisure destination is to encourage people to stay for longer. Surely by structuring parking charges as Inverness has done will achieve this. Currently in Elgin the charges do not offer this incentive (and there are many comments from the surveys to this effect) yet Inverness does and with free parking it seems, at all other shopping destinations locally how can Elgin City Centre compete?

2.1.2 How car parking charges can support the revitalisation of Town Centres.

The current literature referring to the revitalisation of Town Centres without exception refers to car parking in some form or another as a key driver if implemented sympathetically to the town centre or as an inhibitor if used by the Local Authority as a way of raising revenue.

Some take different approaches with recommendations such as the introduction of car parking charges at out of town retail parks to gain a more level playing field (***CSPP Policy Manifesto***)(1) to lowering car parking at certain times, offering discounted parking at certain times etc.

The Federation of Small Business (FSB) publication on '***Keep Trade local***'(2) similarly refers to town centre as the engines of the local economy and recommends that it is essential that parking policy takes account of the needs of the town centre. The report goes on to claim that smaller towns are particularly hit hard by high parking charges leading to a decline in their vibrancy and ability to compete.

FSB believes as do a number of key documents that parking should not be seen as a source of revenue for the Local Authority stating that 'Parking is a service not a source of revenue'

2.1.3 The effects on increasing parking charges:

Evidence indicates that raising car parking charges has a detrimental effect on footfall in the town centres. Elgin has seen a significant reduction in usage in the car parks with a strength of feeling amongst the public and traders in the City Centre that people are either not coming into the centre and going to the retail park where parking is free or staying in the centre for a minimal period and not spending time. This is clearly having an effect on the City Centre retailers. (refer to section 2.2.1 survey results)

Case Study Suffolk District Council:

Parking charges were introduced in Wickham centre (a small village) which historically was a place for people to shop, socialise and spend time. Since the parking charges were introduced in the space of a few months there has been a significant decline in footfall with a noticeable diminishing of the town's previous vibrancy. (**FSB – Keep Trade Local**)

2.1.4 Results of lowering or restructuring car parking charges in Town Centres:

Case Study: Swindon – reduction and restructuring charges.

Following a decrease in footfall of 25% over a 5 year period a consortium of businesses, BID and one shopping centre manager, managed to negotiate a reduction and restructuring of in car parking charges Swindon City Centre in 2009. The restructuring of the charges included an introduction of a flat rate of £2.00 for a 4 hour stay. This was done in July 2010. By November 2010 the increase in like for like sales stood at 6.5 % with a further increase to 6.9% by January 2011. There was also a significant increase in footfall with 286,000 more visitors to Brunel Shopping Centre in 2011 compared to the same period in 2010 before the charges were reduced. The one key noticeable aspect being, that people are staying far longer in town having lunch and taking time to browse. (Swindon Advertiser www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/9066662) (3)

Case Study: Chester – Timed Free Parking

Chester City Centre – Chester City Centre Management dealt with continued declining footfall after 3pm by negotiation with their local council to introduce free parking in the 2 main city centre car parks after 3pm. The results of this have meant that the levels of footfall have increased back in line with national patterns (previously people would not shop after 3pm due to the high parking charges) (21st Century High Streets – British Retail Consortium) (4)

Case Study – Barnet – Seasonal Reductions

Barnet – Barnet Council introduced a seasonal parking scheme where they reduced parking charges from 20th December – 4th January in all of its 15 car parks. The cost of an hour's parking was reduced from £1.50 to 10p and 50p for 2 hours. The result of this led to an increase of 35% in occupancy of the car parks with local business reporting increased trade. (21st Century High Streets – British Retail Consortium) (5)

Although all these case studies have approached the issue of high parking charges in different ways the results clearly show that parking charges have a significant influence over where customers will choose to shop.

Section 2.2

Primary Research findings introduction:

On line surveys were carried out with the Business Community in the BID area, general public via Facebook and via one local business –Pizzeria Toscana with their customers. A copy of the full results can be found at Appendices 3-5. This section contains a summary of the key findings along with a selection of comments:

2.2.1 Business Survey

A total of 50 responses were received to the business survey from City Centre businesses.

Full Business Survey results can be found at Appendix 3

A summary of the results indicates that overall the business community feel that car parking charges are too high and this is having a direct detrimental effect on trade in the City Centre **(71%)**

Many were able to forward comments from their customers in relation to how the rise in car parking had altered their shopping habits with the majority only staying in the centre to shop for a minimum period of time no longer than 1 hour or indeed not visiting at all. This is also reflected strongly in the consumer survey.

KEY STATS

- **76.2%** stated that they no longer park in the City Centre car parks but will park in the streets at no charge. This as we know has created significant problems for residents as reported in the Northern Scot (Friday 14th October letters page (p11)).
- **91.7%** stated that they believed the parking charges were deterring people from shopping in the city centre.
- When asked about suggested changes to the car parking pricing structure **51.4%** stated that the pricing should be restructured and free parking should be reintroduced at Lossie Green with **43.2%** stating that car parking should be reduced back to previous fees.

Comments

'The car parking charges are the single most talked about issue regarding the decline of the High Street.'

'Yes since the charges were implemented our business has lost over 15% from its turnover'

'...Just look at the plain-stones on a Saturday to see the wide range of ages that still come up the High Street even though it has dropped a lot recently. The High Street and surrounding area of Elgin has a lot of history attached to it and if we do not do something now we could see it disappear forever. Please do not let this happen'

'Customers have commented that why should they pay to come shopping in the city centre. So now they only shop at the out of town retail park. I feel that if the Council policy does not change the public will have changed their shopping habits and the town centre will end up like a ghost town.'

'When I last checked parking in Inverness was cheaper and Inverness has a lot more to offer. At what point will Moray Council realise that lost non domestic rates and reduction in money into the local economy far outstrips any increase revenue from parking.'

'Could the council offer 2 types oftickets - one for LossieGreen and one for the city centre priced at £20 and £40 and paid by D/D on a 6 monthly or annual basis to reduce admin costs'

'A selection of car parking spaces from multi storey car parks could be set aside and offered for long term parking equivalent to £1.50 per day for example.'

'I remember when the parking was cheaper at 40p an hour..people do not mind paying this amount and this kept the City Centre vibrant. Remember Elgin is not a big City and should not be overcharging for parking. It would be far more beneficial and economically viable to have cheaper parking with more cars in the car parks than to have expensive parking with the car parks only half full'

2.2.2 Consumer Survey

There were a total of 30 responses received to the consumer survey which was posted on the Elgin BID Facebook page. This survey was available for completion over a 7 day period.

The full results can be found at Appendix 4

A summary of the results indicate that overwhelmingly consumers are being discouraged from coming to the City Centre to shop or only coming from a minimum period of time. This totally contradicts the growing trend that High Streets and City Centres should be as much about leisure activities as retail. Elgin currently is not encouraging either. It also goes against many of the recommendations within the Elgin City for the Future project which puts the High Street as one the 5 key platforms for change.

KEY STATS:

- **53.3%** of respondents stated that the car parking charges have reduced the time they would spend in the High Street. (this is noted as being lower than the business survey) however taking account of all other external factors surely there need to be **no discouragement** to people from using our City Centre?
- **81.3%** stated that they now shop at Springfield Retail Park when they used to shop in the City Centre.
- When asked about suggested changes to the car parking pricing structure **66.7%** stated that car parking should be reduced back to previous fees with **36%** stating that they would like to see free parking reintroduced at Lossie Green.

Comments:

'Now only spend time in Elgin when it is essential for my needs'.

'I would normally have spent 6 hours in the Elgin Centre now I shop at the retail park.

'Yes we did park in St Giles car park before the price increase but now park in free places & walk in.

'I now make trips as quick in/out as possible and would not make time for Jimmy Chungs or Pancake place lunches'

I spend less than an hour in Elgin and plan bigger longer shopping trips for Inverness where parking is cheaper.

'I know the fee is only £1 but that on top of fuel increases is one more thing I don't want to have to pay when coming to Elgin to shop'.

Definitely reintroduce free parking at Lossie Green...attempts to make improvements to the Town Centre are being thwarted by changes to rules applied to the retail parks (removal of bulky goods restriction) and free parking available there is putting people off the town centre.

2.2.3 Pizzeria Toscana Survey -23 responses were received.

KEY STATS

- The results from the survey carried out by Pizzeria Toscana show similar results with **86.4%** of respondents stating that their parking habits had changed with the majority parking in the streets, Cooper Park or Tesco and Aldi where parking is free.
- Further the comments received from many indicated that they will stay in town for a minimum time or not come in at all.
- When asked about suggested changes to the car parking pricing structure **31.8%** stated that car parking should be reduced back to previous fees with **22.7%** stating that they would like to see free parking reintroduced at Lossie Green and city centre car park fees reduced.

Comments:

'If I cannot park for free then I will just go to Asda or somewhere else'

'Car parks should be free for shoppers for 2 -3 hours Monday – Thursday to encourage people to come into town. The cost of parking puts me off coming and supporting local business'

'Up to £1.50 for 3 hours is more realistic – you need 3 hours to make any shopping trip worthwhile especially if you have coffee as well'

3.0 Conclusions

Parking fees have a direct affect in footfall on High Streets. Case studies outlined in this report at section 2.1.3 and 2.1.4 provide evidence showing this. The results of the 3 surveys carried out at section 2.2 also indicate the significant reluctance among consumers and businesses to pay the increased parking fees in Elgin with many going to great lengths to avoid paying. We have seen a rise in parking in residential streets causing problems for the local residents. We have also seen the problems within Cooper Park which has led to restrictions being put in place to deter people parking all day. This is surely evidence enough to show that people are just not prepared to pay the costs.

Comparing ticket sales between 2009 and 2010 (April – March) shows a complete reversal in the length of time people are staying in the City Centre. (Appendix 1 refers)

Example: Sales of the up to 1 hour ticket, which in 2009 was 67,558 less than up to 2 hours has increased by 73,188, with 85,090 more tickets for up to 1 hour now being sold as opposed to up to 2 hours. Sales of the longer stay tickets (up to 2 hours and 2 -4 hours) have reduced by a total of 103,107 between 2009 and 2010. **This is further evidence that suggest people are not willing to pay the higher charges to park and doing their shopping as quickly as possible. This inevitably has had an impact on the vitality of the City Centre.**

The Elgin City for the Future cites Elgin City Centre as one of the 5 platforms for change in the economic regeneration of Elgin and outlines a number of recommendations for improvement over the next 10 -15 years. It goes onto state that *“a performing core city (Elgin) is an essential component for sustaining wider economic wellbeing”* (6). This is an exciting report which provides a long term vision for the future of Elgin City Centre. This however will take time to develop – what in the meantime is the threat to the vibrancy of our High Street if parking charges remain as they are? Action is required now before we see more retail closures and further reduced footfall. The Health Check report produced by the Council cites Elgin City Centre as vibrant – this is unlikely to remain unless there is consideration given to reducing or restructuring the parking charges. **It has been shown to work in other areas.**

The work of Elgin BID (which the local Authority is investing in) is being thwarted by the car parking charges. BID attempts to attract inward investment, for example, will depend on levels of footfall, business confidence and ability to compete against the out of town shopping. There are opportunities to do this over the next 4 years, however it is difficult to justify the cost of parking against the offer on the City Centre at the moment. Reducing or restructuring the charges will support the on-going work of BID. **Facebook comment: ‘Really think you (BID) are doing a great job but we must address the parking charges. I love a dander roon the toon and dinner but not if parking is out of it....’**

Bid understands that there is great pressure on the Local Authority to reduce costs however, this is not the way to do it. As more and more business close then we will see a ghost town, reduced income from non-domestic rates, no inward investment due to lack of footfall and thus, what the then if the future vision of Elgin City for the Future?

As stated earlier, this report is not suggesting that car parking costs are the only factor in the equation threatening the future of the City Centre however this is an area which clearly has a significant effect on shopping preferences and thus a real and tangible threat.

The key difference with this in comparison to other external factors such as the global recession is that this is within control of the Local Authority to do something about and support Elgin City Centre. The evidence is there, consumers have voted by their actions.

4.0 Recommendations:

The following recommendations are developed from the evidence gathered in this report:

- ❖ Taking into account the dramatic reduction in ticket sales for longer stay parking and the level of parking charges in Inverness City Centre, Moray Council should consider restructuring the parking charges to encourage people to visit and stay longer in the City Centre. The following charges could be adopted: up to 2 hours £1.00, 2 -4 hours £2.00 and 4 – 10 hours £3.00.
- ❖ Low use car parks should be allocated for businesses and employees in the City Centre and lower cost monthly passes could be offered. This would increase the usage on the less used car parks and reduce the instances of parking on residential streets. A survey of business to gauge how much they would be willing to pay should be carried out. This would also increase income to the Council.
- ❖ Respondents to all 3 surveys recommended that free parking should be reintroduced at Lossie Green. The issue of there being absolutely no free parking in Elgin seems to be one of the most contentious issues. This should be considered.

CAR PARK TICKET ANALYSIS BY TARIFF**YEARS 2009/10, 2010/11**

	Up to 1 hr	Up to 2 hrs	2 - 4 hrs	4 - 10 hrs	Total
2009					
April	18,833	24,382	6,573	967	50,755
May	19,761	25,029	6,517	1,027	52,334
June	19,683	25,019	6,028	1,007	51,737
July	20,259	27,382	7,693	1,026	56,360
August	19,100	27,041	6,850	1,026	54,017
September	3,394	4,542	999	543	9,478
October	7,589	11,482	2,998	786	22,855
November	14,943	20,914	5,294	1,039	42,190
December	18,240	30,346	7,674	1,275	57,535
January	12,300	18,213	4,679	1,316	36,508
February	14,210	17,633	2,689	1,007	35,539
March	16,699	20,586	4,957	1,020	43,262
	185,011	252,569	62,951	12,039	512,570
2010					
April	22,311	13,336	3,059	720	39,426
May	22,554	13,796	3,119	735	40,204
June	17,623	11,229	2,318	770	31,940
July	23,712	16,442	3,814	821	44,789
August	22,407	15,308	3,484	812	42,011
September	22,301	14,249	3,068	877	40,495
October	24,435	16,810	3,744	821	45,810
November	23,033	15,614	3,721	842	43,210
December	20,678	17,296	4,048	1,267	43,289
January	19,376	13,126	2,787	692	35,981
February	19,083	12,758	3,293	762	35,896
March	20,686	13,145	2,849	828	37,508
	258,199	173,109	39,304	9,947	480,559

1&2 - data for September and October 2009 was corrupted and should be treated with caution

CAR PARKING CHARGES IN INVERNESS CITY CENTRE MAIN CAR PARKS

Eastgate Car Park

Up to 4 hours £2.00

Up to 6 hours £3.00

Up to 10 hours £5.00

Up to 12 hours £6.00

Up to 18 hours £10.00

Up to 24 hours £15.00

Old Town Rose Street

Up to 30min - £0.20 (For each subsequent 10min period up to 1hr - £0.20)

For each subsequent 10min period from 1hr up to 2hrs - £0.10

2hrs to 4hrs - £1.50

4hrs to 9hrs - £3.00

9hrs to 24hrs - £4.00

Each subsequent day in excess of 24hrs - £2.00

Strothers Lane

Up to 1 hour £1.00

Up to 4 hours £2.00

Up to 6 hours £3.00

Business Survey

59 responses out of 67 (those businesses we have e mails for)

<p>Q1 Do you currently use the car parks in the City Centre on a daily basis? (49 responded)</p> <p>63.3% (31) respondents do not use the City Centre car parks 36.7% (18) respondents do use the City Centre Car Parks.</p>
<p>Q2 If you or your employees do park in the City Centre which locations are normally used? (42 responded)</p> <p>76.2% (32) respondents park in the streets around the City Centre with no charge. 28.6% (12) respondents use Lossie Green 21.4% (9) respondents use the City Centre car parks</p>
<p>Q3 When asked if they would previously have parked in the City Centre car parks but no longer do so, to comment on why, comments received included: (35 commented)</p> <p>Related Comments <i>'Because of the charges/too expensive to park every day' (25 respondents).</i> <i>'My staff and customers cannot afford it'</i> <i>'Weekend parking is a nightmare for me (lives in the centre) as motorists are taking up residential spaces to avoid paying for parking.'</i> <i>'Used to park in Batchen Street car park (4 members of staff 6 days a week) since charges went up no longer do so – this would amount to a fair amount of lost revenue to the Council.'</i></p>
<p>Q4 When asked if they were aware of the monthly ticket and would they buy one, and if not why not? (46 responses received)</p> <p>20 stated that they knew about it but would not buy one as it was too expensive 18 stated that they were not aware of the ticket but would not buy one as it was too expensive 2 currently purchase the monthly ticket 6 other (i.e.: do not come into Elgin often enough or did not respond)</p> <p>Related Comments: <i>'Could the council offer 2 types of tickets one for Lossie green and one for the city centre priced at £20 and £40 and paid by D/D on a 6 monthly or annual basis to reduce admin costs'</i> <i>'A selection of car parking spaces from multi storey car parks could be set aside and offered for long term parking equivalent to £1.50 per day for example.'</i></p>
<p>Q5 If the cost of the monthly ticket was reduced to £50.00 would you consider purchasing one?</p> <p>81.8% (44) respondents stated that if the cost of the monthly ticket was reduced to £50 per month they would still not consider purchasing one.</p>
<p>Q6 When asked if they had noticed a reduction in trade since the parking charges were increased and did they believe that this was entirely due to the rise in parking charges:</p>

(43responded)

30 stated that they had noticed a down turn in trade and believe that this is directly related to charges as customers are commenting that they don't have time to browse, watching their times, not stopping for lunch, coffee, staying no longer than 1 hour.

7 stated that they felt that there were too many other variables to consider

5 stated that car parking was not applicable to their business(mostly those who use internet mainly for customer contact)

Related Comments:

'The car parking charges are the single most talked about issue regarding the decline of the High Street.' (main body)

Q7 Do you believe that overall the car parking charges are deterring people from shopping in the City Centre? (48 responded)

91.7% (44) respondents stated that they believed that car parking charges are deterring people from shopping in the City Centre

Q8 When asked if they could forward specific comments from customers about the effects of increased car parking charges the following comments were received (a selection)

32 forwarded comments.

Related Comments

'Many of our customers and tenants continue to complain about the parking charges and the negative affect this has had on the High Street. Lots of comments about Inverness being cheaper and yet having more to offer.'

'I had forgotten you were here I always park at Edgar Road which is free and shop there'.

'My customers state that they will only come into town when they really have to and spend the minimum of time here due to the cost of parking.'

Q9 When asked what changes they would recommend from the prepared list the following was received: (37 responded)Note: 8 respondents selected more than one choice.

50% (19) stated that the charges should be restricted (i.e.: £1.00 for 2 hours/£3.00 for 2 – 4 hours) and that free parking should be reinstated at Lossie Green

44.7% (17) stated that car parking charges should be reduced back to previous fees

13.5% (5)stated that the charges should be restricted only (as above)

13.8% (6) stated that the city centre car parks remain as they are but reintroduce free parking at Lossie Green.

Additional comments:

'maximum of £4.00 for a 6 hour stay to help local workers and reintroduce free parking at LossieGreen'

'£1 flat fee throughout the Town for 2-3 hour'

'I believe parking should be free but if this was not on the agenda then a flat fee of 50p for 1 to 2 hours and £1 for 2 hours and above'

'Return Lossie Green to free parking and charge for the car parks to be £1 for up to 3 hrs and £3 for 3-5 hrs'

Q10 Respondents were asked to submit further comments: (27 comments received)

Selection of Related Comments:

'People can park in towns out of Elgin for free. Elgin is supposed to be the heart of Moray. Retailers are suffering ...people don't have enough time to do anything in an hour'.

'Reducing fees to get people to consider parking longer in the City including me'.

'Forres is free..out of town shopping is free parking at the retail park on this side of Inverness is free.. and Inverness city centre car parks are cheaper..Elgin needs help not hinderences to compete.'

'To encourage more people to come into the Town Centre we have to have free parking near the town and reduce monthly parking fees to help people who work in the town..more disposable income will increase spend especially at lunchtimes.'

'Allow free parking on a Saturday from 9 – 12 to encourage shoppers '

'Parking up to 4 hours should be reasonable to encourage shoppers to spend time'.

Consumer Survey: 30 RESPONSES RECEIVED

<p>Q1 Do you currently use the car parks in the City Centre on a daily basis(29 responded)</p> <p>44.8% (13) respondents currently park in the City Centre on a daily basis. 55.2% (16) do not use the car parks</p>
<p>Q2 If you do park in the City Centre which locations do you normally use? (28 responded)</p> <p>50% (14) respondents park in the streets around the City Centre with no charge 46.4% (12) respondents park in the City Centre Car Parks. 28.6% (8) respondents park at Lossie Green</p>
<p>Q3 When asked if they would previously have parked in the City Centre car parks but no longer do so, to comment on why, comments received included: (9 commented)</p> <p>Related Comment 'Used to park but now no longer do because of the cost' (5)</p>
<p>Q4 Has the increase in parking charges reduced the time you would normally spend in Elgin City Centre?(30 responded)</p> <p>53.3% (16) respondents stated that the rise in parking charges HAD NOT reduced the time they would normally spend in the City Centre.</p>
<p>Q5 When asked to comment on how long they would now spend in the City Centre shopping or for leisure time or if they no longer come into the centre where this is directly related to the rise in parking charges; (15 commented)</p> <p>Comments received included:</p> <p><i>'I now make trips as quick in/out as possible and would not make time for Jimmy Chungs or Pancake place lunches'</i></p> <p><i>'I don't feel relaxed enough to browse or wander while worrying if time if running out on my parking space. So I usually plan in advance where to go and ignore anything other than mu main mission'</i></p> <p><i>'Now only spend time in Elgin City Centre when it is essential to my needs'.</i></p> <p><i>'Can go to the retail park for shopping rather than the City Centre. Parking at the retail park is free'</i></p>
<p>Q6 Where do you shop mostly now? (where you would previously have shopped in Elgin City Centre) please tick all that apply. (18 responded) NOTE: 6 Respondents selected more than one option.</p> <p>83.3% respondents stated that they now shop at Springfield Retail Park 33.3% respondents stated that they now shop in Inverness 16.7% respondents stated that they now shop in Aberdeen.</p>

Q7 As part of the report to Moray Council, Elgin BID may be recommending changes to the car parking based on the evidence gathered. Can you please tick what changes you would recommend based on the list below? (27 responded)

66.7% respondents stated that the parking charges should be reduced (based on previous fees)

33.3% respondents stated that the city centre car parks should remain as they are but reintroduce free parking at Lossie Green

7.4% respondents stated that the charges should be restructured.

Further comments and Suggestions:

'£1 at Lossie Green is a bargain compared to other towns/cities. It has Not altered when and how often I visit the centre of Elgin. However I am fit and able to walk from Lossie Green into the centre. Feel other car parks nearer centre are too expensive.'

'Reduce the parking charges & reintroduce free parking in Lossie Green, if not 7 days a week then just at weekends when it's the majorities leisure time.'

Q8 Respondents were asked to submit further comments: (11)

'Recently been to my home town. Thriving town centre. 10p for one hour. Shops all filled. House prices high'.

'Definitely reintroduce free parking at Lossie Green. Attempts to make improvements to the town centre are being thwarted by changes in rules applied to the retail park and free parking available there for big brand chain stores while putting people off town centre shopping due to added parking costs.'

'I know the fee is only £1 but that on top of fuel increases is one more thing I don't want to have to pay when coming into Elgin to shop'

Pizzeria Toscana Survey - 23 responses received

Q1 As a customer at Pizzeria Toscana and a visitor to Elgin town centre, do you currently use, or have you previously used, Elgin centre car parks? (23 responded)

91.3% stated that they use the city centre car parks
8.7% stated that they do not

Q2 Since the introduction of parking charges at Lossie Green, and since the increase of parking charges in Elgin town centre car parks, would you say that your parking habits have changed? (22 responded)

86.4% respondents stated that their habits had changed
13.6% respondents stated that their habits had remained the same.

Q3 If your answer to Question 2 was YES, then please comment here:(16 responded)

*Park on streets where it is free (10)
Up to £1.50 for 3 hours is more realistic. You need to have 3 hours to make a shopping trip worthwhile esp. if you are having lunch.
Make Lossie Green free again.*

Q4 Has the increase in parking charges and/or the introduction of parking charges to Lossie Green affected the frequency of your visits to Elgin town centre (22 Responded)

59.1% respondents stated that the charges had not affected the frequency of their visits to Elgin
40.9% respondents stated that the changes had affected the frequency of their visits to Elgin.

Q5 If your answer to Question 4 was YES, then please comment here (10 commented)

*Rarely go to the High Street
Not been up town as often go to Asda or Tesco..sorry free parking.
Parking is too expensive so I tend to just visit just once a week.*

Q6 Has the increase in parking charges and/or the introduction of parking charges to Lossie Green affected the frequency of your visits to Pizzeria Toscana? (22 Responses)

81.8% respondents stated that the increase had not affected their visits
18.25 respondents stated that it had.

Q7 If your answer to Question 6 was YES, then please comment here: (2 comments received)

*No free parking - no visit to Toscana!
rarely go now*

Q8 Do you feel that the car parking charges in the Elgin centre car parks are too high? (23 responded)

78.3% stated that they felt charges were too high
21.7% stated that they did not.

Q9 If your answer to Question 8 was YES, then what in your opinion would be suitable parking rates for Elgin town centre car parks? e.g. 60p up to 1 hour/£1 up to 2 hours/£1.50 up to 3 hours (18 responded)

Main responses included:

Less than £1 for an hour – 50p an hour.

£1.50 for up to 3 hours.

Free at Lossie Green or at least free in one car park in Elgin

Q10 Select one of the following answers that would likely increase the frequency of your visits to Pizzeria Toscana and/or Elgin town centre (23 Responded)

Decrease in parking charges at Elgin town centre car parks and removal of charges at Lossie Green. - 21.7%

Decrease in parking charges at all of Elgin town centre car parks including Lossie Green. - 34.8%

Visits to Pizzeria Toscana and/or Elgin town centre would remain the same regardless of the cost of car parking charges. - 34.8% (8)

Other (2) - Free parking everywhere

We usually visit in the evenings when there at no charges

References :

- (1) CSPP Manifesto – Because Scotland’s Worth It
- (2) Federation of Small Business – Keep Trade Local – Parking
- (3) Swindon Advertiser www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/9066662
- (4) 21st Century High Streets – a new vision for our Town Centres. British Retail Consortium.
- (5) 21st Century High Streets – a new vision for our Town Centres. British Retail Consortium.
- (6) Elgin City for the Future (Part 1) – Executive Summary and Action Plan

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Moray Town Centre Health Checks Report 2010

Scottish Grocers Federation – Local Shop Manifesto 2011

www.shopping-centre.co.uk – ‘The Right Price’and ‘Set Your Parking Free’

www.alloaadvertiser.com – ‘No Charge’

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