

The Forum of Private Business is calling on councils across the UK to lend their support to small businesses by waiving parking charges on the first UK Small Business Saturday on 7th December.



The inaugural Small Business Saturday UK will celebrate small businesses across the UK, and is the culmination of a campaign to encourage communities to shop local and support their small businesses. The Forum has written to all local authorities to ask them to consider removing parking charges on the day in the spirit of the event and to help provide an added incentive to shoppers to hit their local high streets.

Parking charges discourage many consumers from shopping on the high street, diminishing small businesses' customer base. The Forum believes removing these charges on 7th December would help generate the conditions needed to make Small Business Saturday UK a great success.

The UK is home to 5 million small businesses. Providing two thirds of private sector employment and almost half of private sector

turnover, small firms are also a driving force in the recovery and getting Britain trading at pre-recession levels. Small Business Saturday represents a unique opportunity to support our small businesses in showcasing their products and services to local communities.

Since the campaign launched earlier this year some councils have integrated free parking into their plans to support Small Business Saturday. A small number have already taken a progressive approach to parking charges and are currently trialling free or reduced charge initiatives. The Forum welcomes this work by councils but in order to maximise the success of the day across the whole of the UK we want to see all councils implement this policy.

Phil Orford MBE, Chief Executive of the Forum of Private Business said:

“Small businesses make up the grass roots of our membership and are at the heart of every

local community. The Forum is a proud supporter of Small Business Saturday, which is about reconnecting people with the small businesses in their local areas and demonstrating the enormous value that they bring to individual customers and to the UK as whole. To make it a real success everyone needs to play their part and local councils have a key role to play in removing one of the barriers for small businesses.”

Commenting on the Forum’s call to action Michelle Ovens from Small Business Saturday UK said:

“Small Business Saturday is all about supporting small businesses, in whatever way we can, as consumers and businesses. Free parking is a great way to encourage more people into town centres on 7th December, and we are really excited to hear about more and more councils coming on board to offer this. Great news!”