

Meeting Date	Monday 9 June 2014
Report Title	Proposed Relocation of Sittingbourne Market
Cabinet Member	Cllr. David Simmons, Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs
SMT Lead	Brian Planner
Head of Service	Brian Planner
Lead Officer	Lyn Newton
Key Decision	Yes
Classification	Open

Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To note the report and the continuing informal consultation on the revised and preferred option for the relocation of Sittingbourne Market at the top part of the High Street2. To agree that Officers proceed to the stage of the drafting of a Traffic Regulation Order and the procurement of services to support this work in preparation for formal consultation
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1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a further update on the proposed relocation of Sittingbourne Market and the informal consultation that has been undertaken since November 2013; identifies a revised location for a street market at the top part of the High Street along with the next steps.
- 1.2 This continuing work will require ongoing consultation, the procurement of specialist and technical services to draft the Traffic Regulation Order, a Traffic Sign Strategy, Enforcement Policy, Feasibility and Safety Audit, Letter of Agreement and appointment of highways contractor(s).

2 Background

- 2.1 The weekly market operates on a Friday and is currently located on part of The Forum Car Park which is within an area designated for wider town centre regeneration; the ambition is therefore to relocate the town market to the High Street alongside retailers taking advantage of additional space to 'grow' the market improving both the offer and range of goods whilst benefitting from a natural pedestrian footfall. It is envisaged that a town market would continue to operate from its new location at the top of the High Street on a Friday but also on a Saturday through the existing Traffic Regulation Order. The matter has been

previously discussed by the Joint Transportation Board in September and December 2013.

- 2.2 Extensive informal consultation (statutory and non-statutory) has raised a number of issues around a full High Street closure on a Friday impacting particularly on the lower part of the High Street. The original proposal to close the entire length of the High Street has therefore now been revised to a more defined section of the upper High Street through to the junction with Central Avenue; to ensure access to the lower High Street continues to be maintained the Council will explore re-routing traffic down Central Avenue and into the lower High Street, re-siting of the bus stop/shelter from the top part of the High Street to Central Avenue and a re-siting of those disabled bays in Central Avenue to the area immediately outside a national High Street bank.
- 2.3 This revised proposal has now been shared with local bus operators at the recent Quality Bus Partnership meeting and those individuals and organisations that have been forthcoming through earlier consultation events such as the Sittingbourne Market Co-operative, retailers, businesses and community organisations. The Council is seeking a wider audience in the town and has also issued a press statement advising of the revision to the proposed relocation of the market in the town.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 The Council remains clear in its intentions in that it needs to consider the possible and potential implications of the wider town centre regeneration and wants to create a vibrant, sustainable High Street destination where retailers and traders co-exist. The Council is continuing its informal consultation on this revised proposal but wants to move to a position to procure specialist and technical services to draft the Traffic Regulation Order, a Traffic Sign Strategy, Enforcement Policy, Feasibility and Safety Audit, Letter of Agreement and appointment of highways contractor(s).
- 3.2 The revised proposal is to relocate the market from its existing site on part of The Forum Car Park to the top part of the High Street in Sittingbourne.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 A number of town centre locations for a street market have been considered as part of the early project discussions but all have been discounted in favour of a High Street location. Research also indicates that the vitality and sustainability of a town centre is dependent upon the mutual co-existence of retailers and traders in close proximity to other support services (e.g. financial services, library, buses).

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Informal community engagement has and will remain a high priority; to date there have been 'drop-in' sessions, direct mail (including email), telephone responses,

individual meetings, attendance at the Sittingbourne Local Engagement Forum and Sittingbourne Retailers Association, media stories and radio interviews. In addition, there has been a Members' Briefing, presentations to the Quality Bus Partnership and the Joint Transportation Board. The drafting of a Traffic Regulation Order requires informal and formal consultation.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Embracing Localism Open for Business Healthy Environment
Financial, Resource and Property	Procuring services associated with the drafting of a Traffic Regulation Order and costs associated with a Traffic Sign Strategy, Enforcement Policy, Feasibility and Safety Audit, Letter of Agreement and appointment of highways contractor(s). The work will be funded through the Regeneration Fund.
Legal and Statutory	Drafting of a Traffic Regulation Order
Crime and Disorder	None
Sustainability	The initiative supports the economic vitality of the area and the town centre in particular and provides an opportunity to demonstrate localism in action through the contract award (Sittingbourne Market Operative)
Health and Wellbeing	An enhanced and improved market offer with greater visibility will promote and support healthier lifestyles through partnership working.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The technical work which has yet to be undertaken will consider these issues
Equality and Diversity	The consultation undertaken to date indicates that there will be greater 'buy-in', support and project sustainability moving forward

7 Appendices

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

- Appendix I: Proposed Market Location

8 Background Papers

None