

<b>TO:</b>	<b>JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>25<sup>th</sup> June 2006</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>FAVERSHAM TOWN CENTRE TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS</b>
<b>BY:</b>	Project Manager
<b>Classification:</b>	Unrestricted
<b>Summary:</b>	The report describes progress of the review of traffic flows in Faversham town centre. The report summarises history to date and suggests options to take forward, in principle only at this stage
<b>Implications:</b>	Human Resources Implications – Officer time, both KCC and SBC, required to further investigate, consult and develop proposals Finance Implications – funding needs to be sought to progress feasibility and design Legal Implications – Traffic orders will need to be developed in conjunction with Kent County Council Crime & Disorder Implications – none Sustainability Implications – none Risk Implications – None
<b>Decision Required:</b>	Members are asked to recommend that the feasibility of introducing Option 2 be progressed in principle at this stage. However, funding will need to be sought to further progress this scheme to enable the detailed feasibility to be undertaken and confirm that this would present the best option.

### Introduction

1. The problems of inappropriate vehicular access to the town centre have been reported to this Board and the Faversham and Swale East Area Forum on a number of occasions. The last report to this board (26<sup>th</sup> March 2007) asked members to consider an option for the closure of the town centre to traffic on an experimental basis. A closure on Market days (Tuesday and Friday) would be an ideal way of testing the closure option. The Saturday closures were not to be affected. Members recommended that the configuration of traffic flows within the town centre be reviewed and options presented to the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2007 meeting of this board. This forms the basis of this report.

### Discussion

7. The current traffic flow is one way throughout the town centre with only one access point located at the Crescent Road/Court Street junction. The two options previously presented to the Faversham and Swale East Area Forum (October 2005) were:

8. Option 1

- Create two way flow in East Street between Newton Road and the Iceland access
- Reversing the direction of the one way flow in East Street between the Iceland access and Preston Street
- Retaining the current one way flow in Preston Street

The main benefits of this option are that it provides for the access to the loading area at Iceland. However, this scheme provides a very limited opportunity to reduce traffic volumes within the town centre. There will also need to be changes to the operation of the traffic signals at East Street to accommodate this, which could have a knock on effect with the operation of the junction. Also, if this scheme were implemented there would be a requirement to install a second gate across the road to enable the current Saturday closures to be implemented.

9. Option 2

- Reverse the flow of the one way direction in Preston Street to run from Stone Street to East Street
- Maintain the current one way direction in East Street

The key benefit of this option is that it would immediately remove the traffic that currently has to pass through Court Street to reach premises in Preston Street. Without traffic surveys it is not possible to quantify the reduction at this time, but from observations the reduction could have a real positive effect on the Guild Hall area and the operation of the market. Also, by creating a situation whereby the only exit point from the town centre would be through a signal controlled junction, the attractiveness of the route as a rat run would be diminished. This option would also allow the closure of the Guild Hall area to traffic without affecting access to Preston Street, which would be useful in the operation of events in the town centre. However, there would be a 'bedding in' period while residents and drivers get used to the new regime, which would require temporary signage to be installed to direct drivers to Preston Street. If the flow were to be reversed in Preston Street this will require re-engineering of the junction with Stone Street. This could include the relocation of utilities plant and a CCTV camera.

10. Two further options (Options 3 and 4) should also be considered:

Option 3

- Reverse the one way operation in Preston Street, Market Street and Court Street

This option does not make any real change from the current situation and just simply reverses the flow. This option could also increase rat running through the centre because it would allow vehicles to bypass the Newton Road traffic signals.

If alternatives to this traffic flow were considered this could bring a benefit to the whole of the town centre by reducing the volume of through traffic. It would not be desirable to reverse the flow within Court Street because it may be hazardous for vehicles to exit from the pedestrianised section of Court Street into Crescent Road, especially when the zebra crossing is considered. However, it would appear possible to reverse the flow of traffic in Preston Street and East Street.

To progress the development of either of these options further, surveys mentioned previously would need to be undertaken. The surveys would be able to give a clear picture of the number of vehicles driving into the town centre and measure how long they are staying for. This will be used to check the suitability of the chosen option.

11. Option 4

- Do nothing

Do nothing must remain an option. However, it does not address the concerns raised relating to the conflicting needs of pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

12. Kent Highway Services (KHS) have been approached in relation to assisting with taking this scheme forward. However, because there is no over-riding safety need to make changes to the function of the highway their view is that the main driver for the project is based upon amenity rather than highway issues. Therefore, while KHS are able to offer advice they would not wish to be able to be actively involved with the development or consultation processes for the scheme because it would divert resources away from their core role of Highway Authority. Swale Borough Council must therefore identify resources to deliver this project.

Recommendation

12. Members are asked to recommend that the feasibility of introducing Option 2 be progressed in principle at this stage. However, funding will need to be sought to further progress this scheme to enable the detailed feasibility to be undertaken and confirm that this would present the best option.

Reasons for Recommendation

13. Option 2 presents the best option because it:
- removes through traffic from Court Street, therefore reduces overall traffic in this area;
  - does not require additional gating to implement the Saturday closure at East Street;
  - Provides flexibility to close the Court Street/Market Street area without affecting the operation of Preston Street that could be useful in events management; and,
  - Does not require alteration to the traffic signals at East Street/Crescent Road

Recommendation

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List of background documents –

Faversham and Swale East Area Forum Reports  
Joint Transportation Board Reports