

**TO:** JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
**DATE:** 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2007  
**SUBJECT:** SITTINGBOURNE INDUSTRIAL PARK  
**BY:** Project Manager  
**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** Report on the damage and vandalism taking place on the industrial estate and seek temporary road closure to control vehicular access

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**Implications:**

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Human Resources Implications: Officer time

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Finance Implications: None for Swale Borough Council

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Legal Implications: Temporary traffic order required

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Crime & Disorder Implications (Section 17): Improves site security

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Equalities & Diversity Implications: None

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Sustainability Implications: None

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Risk Implications: Measures proposed should reduce the vandalism and theft from vacant properties

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**Decision Required:** Members are asked to give delegated authority to the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Board to determine any objections received during the order making process

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**Introduction/Background**

1. Sittingbourne Industrial Estate was constructed in the early 1970's and was home to around 30 companies. The area has been proposed in the emerging local plan for a major mixed use re-development. In recent years, the site was acquired by Hammerson, a major international development company, and is now owned by Tesco.
2. Tesco have significant re-development aspirations for the site and are currently developing their proposals. The Borough Council need to undertake a master planning exercise for the site, which is part of the Milton Creek action area. This will be complete by the end of 2008, and will form the framework within which future planning applications will be determined.
3. Tesco are in the process of relocating a number of companies from the industrial estate to the latest phases of Eurolink. This should be complete by the end of 2008.
4. At this moment in time, there are a significant number of vacant industrial units on the estate. There are a handful of businesses still there, but all are at various stages in the relocation process.
5. In recent weeks, a significant amount of damage, vandalism and theft has occurred in the vacant units. Heating pipes, wiring and other items have been stripped out; in some cases the utilities supply (electricity, gas, water) have not been disconnected.

6. Swale Borough Council, Kent Police, Kent Highway Services and Harrisons (Tesco's Agents) have met recently to discuss the issues and how to improve security at the site. One of the agreed actions is to introduce a gate at the access to the site to prevent vehicular access out of business hours. To introduce the gate, a traffic order for a temporary road closure order will need to be put in place.
7. Other measures discussed include reviewing security practices and introduction of electronic surveillance. These options are being followed up separately.
8. The usual process for a traffic order is for the Highway Authority (Kent Highway Services) to advertise the proposal to introduce the order and invite any objections. These objections are then reported to the next meeting of this Board for determination. In this case, this would mean that any objections would not be reported until March 2008.
9. Harrisons will contact all of the remaining tenants to inform them of the proposed closure. In tandem, the Highway Authority will advertise the traffic order in accordance with statutory process including a 3 week period for objectors to respond. It is not envisaged that any objections will be received because the closure will improve the security of the site, particularly for businesses that are still operating.

#### Issue for decision

10. To consider giving delegated authority to the Chairman/Vice Chairman to determine any objections received in relation to the temporary road closure order.

#### Options

11. The alternative option would be to follow the usual procedure of reporting objections to the next meeting of this Board, but this will not take place until March 2008. During this delay, considerable extra damage could occur. Additionally, with live services still serving some of the units there could be the potential for severe injury.

#### Recommendation

12. Members are asked to give delegated authority to the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Board to determine any objections received during the order making process

#### Reasons for the Recommendation

13. The reasons for the closure are immediate, so in this case it is not practical to wait this length of time to introduce the order. It would enable the temporary road closure and the access barrier to be installed as soon as practically possible and give much improved site security. The Borough Council, Kent Police, Kent Highways and Harrisons will be able to progress other actions to improve the security of the site.

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Report approved by –

Date 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007

List of background documents -