

TO: SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD
DATE: 6th September 2010
SUBJECT: FAVERSHAM TOWN CENTRE TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS
BY: Head of Service Delivery
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To consider a request from Faversham Town Council to close Faversham Town Centre to traffic between 10am and 4 pm Monday to Saturday.

Implications:

Human Resources Implications: To be determined

Finance Implications: Costs to be determined for changes to the traffic order and signing

Legal Implications: Amended Traffic Regulation Order.

Crime & Disorder Implications (Section 17): None

Equalities & Diversity Implications: Closure of the town centre to all traffic will restrict access to disabled badge holders who currently have access during the restricted times on Monday to Friday.

Sustainability Implications: None.

Risk Implications: None

Corporate Plan Implications: Improving Community Safety through safer Highways.

Decision Required: **That the Joint Transportation Board consider the request from Faversham Town Council to amend the existing Traffic Regulation Order covering Faversham Town Centre to restrict access to all vehicles between 10am and 4 pm Monday to Saturday.**

Introduction

1. At a recent meeting of Faversham Town Council the following was resolved (see also Annex A):-

'That Swale Borough Council be asked for the resolution, that was passed at the Annual Town Meeting held on 20th May 2010 seeking closure of the town centre between 10am and 4pm Monday to Saturday, to be re-discussed at the Joint Transportation Board and that Members of Faversham Town Council should also attend that meeting to support the proposal now put forward by Faversham Town Council.'

Background

2. The problems of inappropriate vehicular access to Faversham Town Centre and possible options for improving the situation have been considered by this Board on a number of occasions.

3. A consultation exercise was undertaken in December 2004, which asked the residents of Faversham their views relating to a proposal to close the town centre to vehicular traffic between 10:00am and 4:00pm on Weekdays. This would be in addition to the current Saturday closure. The response to the consultation showed that 70% of the responses supported closure of the town centre to traffic. However, the businesses within the town centre indicated that this closure would cause real problems in terms of deliveries and collections to their premises. The businesses also considered that the restricted access would have an adverse affect on the overall level of trade within the town centre.

4. The experimental closure of the town centre area to traffic on market days was considered by the Board in December 2006. This proposal would have stopped traffic entering the town centre between 10:00am and 4:00pm on Tuesdays and Fridays in addition to the existing Saturday closure. Concern was again expressed by Traders who undertook there own survey of town centre businesses (see Annex A) and concern expressed by disabled drivers who would not be able to park within the town centre on market days.

5. Subsequently the Board in June 2007 considered options for changing the traffic flow in the town centre that would not require closure to all traffic. The Board agreed to the principal of reversing traffic in Preston Street and that funding be sought to progress the scheme to enable a detailed feasibility to be undertaken to confirm that this was the best option. The proposal is to reverse the flow of traffic in Preston Street from Stone Street to East Street and maintain the current one way direction in East Street. This has the benefit of removing the traffic that currently passes through Court Street to reach premises in Preston Street and would allow the closure of the Guildhall area to traffic without affecting access to Preston Street.

6. Progress in developing this option has been slow due to the difficulties in obtaining funding to undertake the necessary surveys of traffic flows, etc. However, this work has now been completed with the support of the local County Members grant funding. The detailed design of this option can now be progressed although funding for this element of work has again to be found. It is anticipated that the Section 106 funding from the Tesco planning approval can be used for this work.

Proposal

7. The current proposal from the Town Council would not require any further work in relation to traffic flows or highway design as it would simply involve a change to the traffic order and signage at the Court Street access which is already controlled by a gate for the current Saturday closure.

8. However, the proposal would impact on those who currently have access under the existing traffic order, in particular residents, business deliveries and disabled badge holders. Letters have been received from a town centre resident, businesses, the former secretary of the Faversham Traders Association, the former President of the Faversham Chamber of Commerce and a disabled resident expressing concerns and objecting to the proposals. These are attached as Annex A.

Recommendation

9. That the Joint Transportation Board consider the request from Faversham Town Council to amend the existing Traffic Regulation Order covering Faversham Town Centre to restrict access to all vehicles between 10am and 4 pm Monday to Saturday.

Author - Brian Planner - Ext. 7357

17 August 2010

List of background documents:

- Annex A – Letters Received
- Report to the Joint Transportation Board on 18 December 2006
- Report to the Joint Transportation Board on 26 March 2007
- Report to the Joint Transportation Board on 25 June 2007