

<b>SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD</b>	<b>Agenda Item: 5</b>
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<b>Meeting Date</b>	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> December 2013
<b>Report Title</b>	Proposed Closure of Sittingbourne High Street to Vehicles on Fridays
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr David Simmons
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Brian Planner
<b>Head of Service</b>	Brian Planner
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Lyn Newton
<b>Classification</b>	Open

<b>Recommendations</b>	Members are asked to note the contents of this report and recommend that Officers proceed with the Traffic Regulation Order to close the High Street to vehicles on Fridays as well as Saturdays to accommodate the proposed market re-location and pursue formal consultation.
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## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides an update following the meeting of the Swale Joint Transportation Board in September 2013. At this meeting Members were advised of the proposed relocation of the weekly Sittingbourne Market from its current location at The Forum Car Park to the High Street, requiring the road to be closed.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The Council has already stated that the current market is relatively small and sits outside of the shopping area with a natural footfall. It is therefore intended that both the size, quality and offer is developed encouraging greater interest, diversity and product ranges, and boosting the shopping offer within the town. A two-day market would create a new energy and focus in the High Street and could encourage community groups to develop a more vibrant and creative street scene through events and activities contained within a safe, traffic-free environment.
- 2.2 In addition to a presentation to the Local Engagement Forum (Sittingbourne) prior to the JTB, informal consultation has commenced with local bus companies through the Quality Bus Partnership and with Kent Police and Kent Highways and Transportation. Work with local residents, independent retailers, members of the Sittingbourne Retailers Association and Sittingbourne Market Co-operative has also been undertaken and will continue to establish the level of interest and key issues if such a move were to be pursued.

### **3 Issue for Decision**

3.1 The proposal presented is as follows:-

3.1.1. To relocate the market from the Forum Car Park to the top end of the High Street (between the Wilkinsons Store and the junction of Central Avenue)

3.1.2. To extend the operation of the market over two days (Fridays and Saturdays)

3.1.3. To close the High Street to traffic on both days (Fridays and Saturdays) to permit operation of the market in the proposed new location

In addition the consultation has sought to establish what activities and events might be possible to complement the market should the objective be achieved.

3.2 At the time of writing this report, the indications are that there is support from both traders and shoppers to relocating the market to the High Street; there is overwhelming support from shoppers to extend the market over two days (Fridays and Saturdays), but traders are equally divided in their opinion. Shoppers are clear that they would support a move to close the High Street to traffic over the two days (Fridays and Saturdays) but again traders are equally divided in their opinion.

3.3 Community engagement has remained a high priority, with activities including a drop-in evening, individual meetings stimulated by the JTB and attendance at the Sittingbourne Retailers Association meeting. Despite this engagement, and the excellent press coverage arising from the LEF meeting which stimulated debate and letters, community interest has been disappointing. It is intended that Officers will continue to consult in the coming weeks amongst both statutory and non-statutory agencies as well as continuing to canvass public interest. A meeting is scheduled with bus companies and Kent County Council as part of this consultation process.

3.4 The Council now seeks the support of the Joint Transportation Board in moving a recommendation to support the issuing of a draft Traffic Regulation Order which formalises the Council's intention to relocate the market to the High Street over two days (Fridays and Saturdays), thus enabling a more formal consultation process to be pursued.

## 4 Implications

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Corporate Plan	Supporting Economy and Regeneration
Financial, Resource and Property	Costs associated with Traffic Regulation Order and on site signing
Legal and Statutory	Traffic Regulation Order to be prepared
Crime and Disorder	None at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Sustainability	None identified at this stage.

## 5 Appendices

5.1 Annex A – Plan of Existing and Proposed Market Locations

## 6 Background Papers

6.1 None.