

<b>SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> December 2022
<b>Report Title</b>	Faversham Town Centre Road Closures
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration
<b>Head of Service</b>	Joanne Johnson Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Joanne Johnson Head of Regeneration, Economic Development and Property
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To proceed with the implementation of Faversham Town Centre Road Closures</li> <li>2. To proceed with the preparation of the draft traffic order and formal consultation on the traffic order</li> </ol>

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the work undertaken to date for the Faversham Town Centre permanent road closure scheme and to recommend the next steps to implement the closure.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 In early July 2020 a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) was arranged for the closure of Faversham Town Centre by Kent County Council (KCC), the highway and traffic authority, to assist with the social distancing measures necessary as a result of Covid-19. The TTRO was then extended for a further year by KCC on 6th January 2021.
- 2.2 An informal consultation exercise took place from 21<sup>st</sup> May to 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021 as a posted, online and on-street survey. The key outcome of the informal consultation was that of the 468 responses received, 51% were in support of the closure and 46% were against the closure.
- 2.3 The results and analysis of the consultation responses were presented to, and noted by, the Swale Joint Transportation Board on 6 September 2021.
- 2.4 Following the results of the informal consultation a decision was taken by Swale Borough Council (SBC) to proceed with the closures and to undertake a technical options assessment and then an outline design on the preferred option.

- 2.5 The options assessment process included:
- **Traffic Count Data Collection** – Undertaken in December 2021
  - **Options Sifting Process** – A total of ten options were reviewed and scored with then three options recommended for further assessment (Appendix I – Options Sifting Assessment)
  - **Air Quality Assessment** – For the three options recommended from the options sifting process
  - **Active Mode Appraisal Toolkit (AMAT)** - For the three options recommended from the options sifting process
  - **Options Assessment** – The three options recommended for further assessment from the sifting process were analysed in further detail (including costings). This options assessment recommended one option to be progressed for implementation (Appendix II – Options Assessment Report)
  - **Concept Design** – Concept design for the option recommended to be progressed (Appendix III – Scheme Drawings)
  - **Equality Impact Assessment** – Of the option recommended to be progressed (Appendix IV – Equality Impact Assessment)
  - **Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audit** – Of the option recommended to be progressed (Appendix V – Road Safety Audit Stage 1/2)
- 2.6. Ongoing informal dialogue took place during the technical assessment process, including meetings with Faversham Town Council in June and July 2022.
- 2.7. Faversham Town Council’s Active Travel Committee considered this report’s recommendations during their meeting of 17 November 2022. The Committee supported the proposals, but resolved to ask Swale Borough Council to review the proposed Option 2b blue badge provision and the Equalities Impact Assessment (i.e. to remove the proposed blue badge exemption for Court Street and Market Street), with a view to balancing the needs of varied disabled user groups. Swale Borough Council discussed this balance with the scheme’s technical consultants, and agreed to retain the recommendation as shown in this report which is considered to achieve the most effective outcome in terms of inclusivity.

### **3 Issue for Decision**

- 3.1 The proposal being put forward is Option 2b from the options assessment process: to implement a permanent closure of the town centre (Court Street, Market Place, Market Street, Middle Row, East Street and Preston Street) between the hours of 10am to 4pm with the following exemptions.
- Permit Holders
  - Blue Badge holders
- 3.2 In summary, Option 2b is the preferred option since the benefit-cost ratio (BCR) is higher than Option 1a, and the recommended hours of closure were supported by

the highest number of survey respondents during the informal consultation in May and June 2021 (meaning it is preferred to Option 2c, which has an equal BCR, and different closure hours).

- 3.3 Although the original Option 2b from the options assessment process restricted access at Court Street between 10am to 4pm daily to permit holders only (i.e. residents), following the completion of the Equality Impact Assessment and reviewing of previous consultation responses Option 2b was amended to include blue badge holders.
- 3.4 The key difference from the existing situation (The Kent County Council (Various Road, Faversham, Borough of Swale)(Traffic Regulation Order 2018)) is the banning of vehicles for loading between 10am and 4pm on non-market days. It is anticipated that on market days on Friday, Saturday and Sunday the full closure will be implemented, with the gates being closed as the current situation.
- 3.5 The closure is expected to be enforced by the provision of ANPR cameras which will be provided as part of Kent’s successful application to the Department for Transport (DfT) to enforce moving traffic offences. This will enable the town centre to remain open for emergency and maintenance access required.
- 3.6 The implementation of the closure through an amended traffic order, ANPR cameras and updated signage is expected to encourage walking and cycling within the town centre and promote town centre regeneration.

## 4 Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended to progress with the implementation of the closure scheme and to undertake the formal consultation on this traffic order. If objections are received then a response to these will be provided and reviewed at a later JTB.
- 4.2 The consultation period is expected to run from 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 to 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023.

## 5. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The proposals align with Swale Borough Council’s Corporate Priority 2 (Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges) by encouraging active travel and reducing car use by restricting access to Faversham Town Centre during the busiest periods for shopping.
Financial, Resource and Property	The current estimate to implement the proposals is £70k, which allows for the installation of 2 x ANPR cameras and updated signage. From discussions with KCC it is understood that the maintenance and ongoing PCN processing would be carried out by KCC (also revenue generation would go to KCC), so Swale would

	<p>be responsible for the initial capital cost, but not ongoing maintenance costs. £20k of this requirement has been allocated to signage, and will be funded by SBC's High Street Fund. The camera costs will require a separate funding source – Swale's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund allocations are being considered as potential funding sources.</p> <p>As part of the proposals DfT's Active Mode Appraisal Toolkit (AMAT) has been undertaken and has produced a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 44 (although it is noted that the AMAT is not fully suited to this type of project).</p>
<p>Legal, Statutory and Procurement</p>	<p>To implement these proposals it will be required to update the Kent County Council (Various Road, Faversham, Borough of Swale)(Traffic Regulation) Order 2018 to reflect the updated restrictions. As part of this update to the traffic order consultation will be required.</p> <p>The ANPR cameras will be procured through KCC and the signage updates will be procured with SBC's highway contractor.</p> <p>Kent have received the Part 6 powers from DfT now and the legal powers for enforcing moving traffic offences will remain with KCC.</p>
<p>Crime and Disorder</p>	<p>The scheme is anticipated to improve the compliance of drivers who are not permitted to be using the town centre, by introducing ANPR camera enforcement.</p> <p>Currently there are in the region of 200 vehicles using Court St during non-market days. This access should only be for loading, permit holders or blue badge holders so there is likely to be a large number of violations of the traffic order currently which should be improved through the ANPR cameras.</p>
<p>Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency</p>	<p>The scheme is intended to encourage walking and cycling within the town centre by reducing the volume of traffic in Faversham Town Centre.</p> <p>An air quality assessment has been undertaken which showed improvements in air quality within the roads where closures were proposed and a worsening of air quality due to subsequent displacement of traffic onto roads outside the town centre. Overall the predicted changes in pollutant concentrations were considered to be Negligible.</p>
<p>Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>The scheme should provide and promote active travel choices for all members of the community to encourage good health and wellbeing. This is backed up by the AMAT assessment undertaken</p>

	which shows benefits from a reduced risk of premature death and absenteeism.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No safeguarding implications are expected from the proposals.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	<p>A risk to the scheme is that the process for KCC installing an ANPR camera is still being developed and KCC are yet to have a camera supplier on board following their successful application to DfT for Part 6 powers. Therefore, the date of when ANPR cameras could be installed is not yet known. Pending ANPR cameras being in place the updated TRO and signage could have limited effectiveness (as shown by the high number of vehicles currently using the town centre).</p> <p>SBC and KCC officers held a positive meeting in October 2022 focussed on the process to secure ANPR enforcement, and the Faversham scheme is understood to meet the criteria that KCC have for their schemes, one of which is to promote active travel. Subject to the necessary formal assessment processes (still to be agreed) KCC officers expressed willingness to consider the Faversham scheme for early implementation once the camera provider is secured.</p>
Equality and Diversity	An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken (Appendix IV) and the scheme is currently expected to have a neutral impact on; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation and other socially excluded groups.
Privacy and Data Protection	The scheme is not anticipated to have any impact on Privacy or Data Collection. Any camera enforcement procured through KCC would use a GDPR compliant company.

## 7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I: Options Sifting Assessment
- Appendix II: Options Assessment Report
- Appendix III: Scheme Drawings
- Appendix IV: Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix V: Road Safety Audit Stage 1/2

## **8 Background Papers**

[Swale Joint Transportation Board Agenda Pack](#) – 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (including Faversham Permanent Town Centre Road Closures Questionnaire Summary Report prepared for SBC by AECOM in July 2021 as an appendix).