

<b>SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
<b>Report Title</b>	Proposed Coach Parking Bays – Church Road/Upper Brents, Faversham
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Mike Knowles, Seafront & Engineering Manager (SBC)
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. Members are asked to note the results of the recent informal consultation on a proposed coach parking bay and single yellow line and recommend that the proposals be progressed through a Traffic Regulation Order.

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

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the recent informal consultation which took place with residents on a proposed coach parking bay and single yellow line in Church Road, The Brents/Upper Brents in Faversham.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 An informal consultation took place with residents between 29<sup>th</sup> March and 21<sup>st</sup> April 2023 on the proposed installation of a coach parking bay and single yellow line in Church Road, The Brents/Upper Brents in Faversham. The proposals were requested by Faversham Town Council and the Borough Council’s Destination and Place Manager, and consisted of a coach parking bay for up to two vehicles on the west side of the road, and a single yellow line opposite the bay to operate between the hours of 8am and 6pm. A copy of the consultation material can be found in Annex A.
- 2.2 The proposals followed a request from travel companies, and links to the Borough Council’s Visitor Economy Framework priorities.

## **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 Of the 5 residents consulted just one response was received, providing a comprehensive objection to the proposals, and this can be found in Annex B.

## 4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 A second site, in Thomas Road, Faversham, was also considered as a possible location for coach parking but was deemed too narrow to safely accommodate larger vehicles without hindering the safe passage of emergency services.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 As detailed above, an informal consultation has been undertaken with residents on the proposed coach parking bay and single yellow line. This followed an initial discussion with the Town Council on possible proposals. Should the proposals be progressed through a Traffic Regulation Order, a statutory formal consultation will take place.
- 5.2 Faversham Town Council Comments: The Town Council have confirmed that they would be happy for the proposals to proceed and added that they are receiving enquires for coach parking on a weekly basis.
- 5.3 Borough Council Destination and Place Manager Comments:  
*Faversham town centre has long been popular with visitors and none more so than in recent times as visitors return to travel in this post pandemic era. Coach travel is a popular choice with independent travellers and for those seeking year-round experiences without the challenge of driving themselves. The Great Britain Day Visitor Report (2019) identified that the spend per head over an average three-hour visit is around £35 and Visit Kent identifies the spend per head for the same period as slightly higher at £36.48. Finding a permanent coach parking site that is easily accessible by coach operators in Faversham has proved to be challenging in recent times.*

*A year-long trial at Macknade ending in December 2022 did not prove as popular as we would have hoped. Coach drivers using a QR code could claim a free hot or cold drink upon arrival, and this allowed Macknade to track usage of the service. Up to the end of August 2022, 21 coach drivers used the QR code to claim their free drink but this number may have been higher, up to 35 coaches over the course of the year as the drivers may not have claimed their free refreshments. The project was externally funded and provided us with an opportunity to assess coach attendance during the high and low seasons.*

*Coaches have also been observed parked up in other areas of the town, i.e. Jubilee Way or overstaying the 15 minutes drop off time in Central Car Park. Whilst this might have been more convenient for the coach visitors, it proved to be a less popular with local residents adding to the highway pressures.*

*Whilst Swale council has looked at his own asset portfolio of potentially suitable spaces in and around Faversham these too have thrown up some interesting challenges of their own including the need for robust technical/engineering responses and investment to make them user-friendly. Ultimately the capital costs for adaptation could prove costly and not represent value for money in terms of pressures on the public purse but there may be external funding to assist which would need to be explored. The council has limited resources to deal with complex technical solutions. In addition, discussions with a local secondary school did not prove to be successful due to the existing pressures on their own estate. Faversham's Destination Marketing Group felt that it could be worth exploring adaptation to the Queen's Hall Car Park (in close proximity to the town centre and railway station). Loss of private vehicle parking spaces, and consequent loss of income for the council are also factors for this location, in addition to capital costs for adaptation.*

*Whilst we are acutely aware that coach travel has not yet returned to the previously pre-pandemic levels, we are confident that it will again prove to be a popular choice for many visitors to the town and surrounding area. Anecdotal evidence from our own visitor attractions suggest that many visitors are still acutely aware of the presence of Covid and prefer to make their own way to destinations. Nevertheless coach travel is anticipated to return to pre-pandemic levels within two years with enquiries around coach parking already coming into the Visitor Information Centre.*

## 6 Implications

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Corporate Plan	Implement the visitor economy framework to increase investment, address new visitor demands and grow the value of the sector to the Swale economy.
Financial, Resource and Property	Cost and Resource for Drafting Traffic Regulation Order, including Formal Consultation. Cost and resource for installing Lines and Signs on site. Cost of £55 for Kent County Council to arrange Sealing of Traffic Regulation Order. Faversham Town Council have agreed to contribute towards these costs.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Formal Consultation of Traffic Regulation Order and Sealing of Traffic Regulation Order by Kent County Council.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Potential reduction in number of vehicles entering town if viable transport options are available to visitors.

Health and Wellbeing	The proposed location for the coach parking is a short walk from the town centre which will promote exercise for visitors. By limiting the proposed single yellow line between the hours of 8am and 6pm, we hope to minimise the impact on the on-street parking for those residents who rely on this in the evenings.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

## 7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
- Annex A – Copy of Consultation Material
  - Annex B – Results of Informal Consultation

## 8 Background Papers

None