

<b>Policy and Resources Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	5 February 2025
<b>Report Title</b>	Parking in Market Place and Court Street, Faversham
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure Joanne Johnson, Head of Place
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Mike Knowles, Seafront and Engineering Manager
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. That this committee note and approve the Joint Transportation Board minutes of 2 December 2024 except for recommendation 433 and instead refer it back to the JTB to be provided with an update and discuss future options.

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

- 1.1 The Joint Transportation Board discussed a matter on Parking in Faversham town centre. A recommendation was made for approval by Policy and Resources.
- 1.2 The recommendation commits SBC to undertaking works not currently budgeted for or resourced and further information on the pedestrianisation scheme, only recently discovered, needs to be discussed before a final outcome is agreed.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 At the meeting of Swale Joint Transportation Board on 2 December 2024, a tabled report described that parking in Market Place and Court Street, Faversham was a 'considerable concern to many residents' and included a proposal for the Swale Joint Transportation Board (JTB) to engage with the working group set-up by Faversham Town Council (FTC) to explore how the issue could be resolved.
- 2.2 Members spoke on the item and comments included;
  - Aware that inconsiderate parking was blocking access to the market and impacting on traders;
  - considered it was important that the Swale JTB engaged with local residents and worked with FTC's Working Group to find a solution and ensure public safety;
  - it was important to encourage visitors to the town centre, but Faversham was a unique town and it was important to get it right;
  - pedestrians and café users were also being put at risk by vehicles entering the town centre;
  - lack of parking enforcement was also an issue;

- there was an absence of controls on vehicles entering the town centre;
- the problems were “underpinned” by the fact that both KCC and SBC had not been able to move forward with the agreed town centre road closure proposals; and
- the Neighbourhood Plan for the town of Faversham had recently been passed and it made a very strong commitment to a walking environment.

2.3 A motion was moved and agreed for the following;

***(1) This Board notes that Faversham Town Council has agreed to write to Swale Borough Council asking them to arrange a meeting with local businesses to discuss town centre parking issues and had set-up a working group (consisting of the Chair and Vice-Chair of its Active Travel Committee and the two relevant borough ward members, with the KCC division member attending as an observer) to represent its views to SBC about town centre parking and gain greater understanding of Swale’s plans for pedestrianisation. That SBC and KCC actively engaged with the working group in order to find an effective solution to the parking problems in the Market Place and Court Street, Faversham, and an effective way forward to implement the recommendation of the December 2022 JTB meeting to proceed with Faversham Town Centre road closures.***

2.4 A considerable amount of work has been done on the car parking issues over many years. Opinions are often split, with some supporting parking restrictions and some opposing for a range of reasons e.g. loss of business, lines and signs not in keeping with conservation area.

2.5 More recently this work included a full project to look at pedestrianisation.

2.6 This followed a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) which was arranged for the closure of Faversham Town Centre by Kent County Council (KCC) in July 2020 to assist with the social distancing measures necessary as a result of Covid-19. The TTRO was extended for a further year in January 2021.

2.7 An informal consultation exercise took place in the summer of 2021 as a posted, online and on-street survey. The key outcome was that, of the 468 responses received, 51% were in support of the closure and 46% were against.

2.8 The results and analysis of the consultation responses were presented to, and noted by, the Swale Joint Transportation Board on 6 September 2021.

2.9 A decision was taken by Swale Borough Council (SBC) to proceed with the closures and to undertake a technical options assessment and outline design on the preferred option.

2.10 The preferred option emerged as the permanent closure of Court Street, Market Place, Market Street, Middle Row, East Street and Preston Street between the hours of 10am to 4pm with exemptions for permit and Blue Badge holders.

- 2.11 The closure was expected to be enforced by the provision of ANPR cameras (as part of Kent's successful application to the Department for Transport to enforce moving traffic offences). It was anticipated that on market days the gates would continue to be closed, as per the current situation.
- 2.12 Subsequently, KCC advised that the camera system they have invested in to enforce their Moving Traffic Enforcement Powers does not currently support the exemption of blue badges. This means that there would be no way to exempt blue badge holders from penalty charges. Although penalty charges could be successfully appealed, this is not a workable arrangement.
- 2.13 The Equalities Impact Assessment of the original pedestrianisation proposals showed that blue badge exemption was necessary for there to be a 'neutral' rather than 'negative' impact on people with disabilities. This exemption was critical to some members' support for the overall scheme.
- 2.14 Whilst KCC have expressed that they are continuing to discuss how the scheme can be progressed, it appears that it is not feasible in the short-medium term.
- 2.15 It should be noted that the funds notionally ring-fenced by SBC for the purchase of the enforcement cameras had to be spent within a fixed period, which is now expired i.e. capital funding for their purchase would need to be identified if and when the pedestrianisation scheme is able to proceed.
- 2.16 With this new information, it is not deemed possible to implement the decision of pedestrianisation without further options being considered.
- 2.17 Furthermore, given that the pedestrianisation project involved consultation with businesses it is felt that further engagement is not needed at the current time.
- 2.18 However, it would of course be sensible for SBC and KCC officers to engage with the newly set up Faversham Town Council working group.
- 2.19 Recently refreshed lining in Preston Street, Faversham (using the block paving rather than cobbled section of the highway) has proved effective both in not drawing complaints of the yellow lines impacting the aesthetics of the location and in allowing enforcement to control inappropriate parking. If the Town Council were supportive of a similar approach in Market Place and Court Street, then this could be tested for a period of time to monitor the impacts on all parties.

### **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 That this committee note and approve the Joint Transportation Board minutes of 2 December 2024 except for recommendation 433 and instead refer it back to the JTB to be provided with an update and discuss future options.

## 4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Approve the whole minutes – this is not recommended as it is not yet clear if the pedestrianisation can be implemented and budget/resources would need to be found to undertake the business engagement.
- 4.2 Not approve the whole set of minutes – this is not recommended as it will prevent other items agreed at the meeting from being progressed.

## 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The recommendation from JTB was to engage with businesses. This has already been done as part of the pedestrianisation project.
- 5.2 Any updates to the Traffic Regulation Orders to allow reinstatement of double yellow lines would need to follow the national rules on consultation.
- 5.3 Further consultation would be required on any pedestrianisation scheme before it is implemented – from KCC on the use of their enforcement powers, and as part of the Traffic Regulation Order process.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Engagement with businesses would need further resource and budget in order to undertake. The original 2021 work included wide ranging user groups so a focus on purely business feedback would likely skew decisions unfairly. It is recommended that this wider consultation would again need external support at an estimated cost of £5,000-10,000.</p> <p>The cost of each ANPR camera was initially budgeted for at circa £20k – 25K. Three would be required. The budget notionally ring-fenced for their purchase is time-expired.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>The main legislation relating to this report is the Road Traffic Act 1991 and Traffic Management Act 2004. Any refresh of lines would need to follow this legislation.</p> <p>On 5th December 2022 JTB agreed;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To proceed with the implementation of Faversham Town Centre Road Closure</li><li>• To proceed with the preparation of the draft traffic order and formal consultation on the traffic order</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This decision recognises the Legal steps necessary to take the scheme forward.</li> </ul> <p>KCC have procured a camera supplier to enforce Moving Traffic violations, who would provide the necessary equipment for a pedestrianisation scheme.</p>
Crime and Disorder	Inappropriate parking is causing concern amongst local residents.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Reduced parking and traffic movements in the town centre will help to promote active travel or use of public transport.
Health and Wellbeing	Fewer vehicle movements will contribute to improved air quality and nicer environment for residents to enjoy shopping/culture.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Not applicable.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Reduced vehicle movements or parking will improve pedestrian safety.
Equality and Diversity	The pedestrianisation scheme has been well researched. One of the major implications was that of parking for blue badge holders. Limited restrictions will not impact this as badge holders can still park on traffic restrictions for up to 3 hours.
Privacy and Data Protection	Not applicable.

## 7 Appendices

7.1 n/a

## 8 Background Papers

8.1 [Joint Transport Board Agenda and Minutes – 2 Dec 2024](#)

8.2 [Joint Transportation Board Agenda and Minutes – 5 December 2022](#)