

SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD	
Meeting Date	3rd March 2025
Report Title	Parking in Faversham Town Centre
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure Joanne Johnson, Head of Place
Lead Officer	Mike Knowles, Seafront and Engineering Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members are asked to note the contents of this report and recommend that officers proceed with drafting a Traffic Regulation Order to reinstate waiting restrictions in the vicinity of the Guild Hall in Faversham Town Centre. 2. Members are asked to agree not to proceed with the implementation of the Faversham Town Centre Road closures scheme until such time as a route to blue badge exemption is clear.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 In December 2024 the Joint Transportation Board discussed a matter on Parking in Faversham Town Centre and a recommendation was made for approval by the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 1.2 The recommendation committed SBC to undertaking works not currently budgeted for or resourced, and at the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting on 5th February 2025, the issue was discussed and it was agreed that the item would be referred back to the Swale JTB for further information. This report provides this additional information.
- 1.3 On 5th December 2022 Joint Transportation Board recommended officers proceed with the implementation of the Faversham Town Centre road closures scheme (introduced during Covid-19), and proceed with the preparation of the draft traffic order and formal consultation on the traffic order. This paper provides an update on scheme progression and proposes members recommend - in the light of new information - not to proceed with the implementation of the Faversham Town Centre Road closures scheme until such time as a route to blue badge exemption is clear

2 Background

2.1 At the meeting of the Swale Joint Transportation Board on 2nd 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. This included an informal consultation with the expectation that any closure would be

enforced by the provision of ANPR cameras, but Kent County Council have since advised that their camera provision cannot support the exemption of blue badge holders. Although penalty charges could be successfully appealed, this is not a workable arrangement.

- 2.6 Without blue badge exemption, the Equalities Impact Assessment for the scheme deems pedestrianisation would have a 'negative' rather than 'neutral' impact on disabled town centre users. This was central to some members' support for pedestrianisation and makes the scheme very difficult to support with existing enforcement options.
- 2.7 With this new information, together with the fact that the fund notionally ring-fenced by SBC for the purchase of the enforcement cameras had to be spent within a fixed period which has now expired, it is not deemed possible to implement the pedestrianisation without further options being considered.
- 2.8 Given that the pedestrianisation project involved consultation with businesses it is felt that further engagement is not needed at the current time.
- 2.9 However, Policy and Resources agreed it would of course be sensible for SBC and KCC officers to engage with the newly set up Faversham Town Council Working Group.
- 2.10 At the Policy & Resources Committee Meeting on 5th February 2025 a recommendation was made that the minutes of the Joint Transportation Board meeting on 2nd December 2024 be approved, except recommendation 433 and instead refer it back to the JTB to be provided with an update and discuss future options.
- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 If the Town Council Working Group were supportive of a similar approach in the area around the Guild Hall in Market Place and Market Street, in West Street (between Market Street and the "No Entry" signs) and in East Street (between the junctions of Preston Street and Newton Road) , a Traffic Regulation Order could be drafted for reinstated double yellow lines as shown on the plan in Annex A. The impact over the short term could then be monitored ahead of future discussions on pedestrianisation.
- 2.13 There would be no requirement for an informal consultation and subject to the Working Group confirming that the proposed restrictions are acceptable the Order could be drafted and advertised without delay.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and recommend that officers proceed with drafting a Traffic Regulation Order to reinstate waiting restrictions in the vicinity of the Guild Hall in Faversham Town Centre.
- 3.2 Members are asked to agree not to proceed with the implementation of the Faversham Town Centre Road closures scheme until such time as a route to blue badge exemption is clear.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 The option of pursuing the pedestrianisation of the Town Centre has been rejected due to issues around camera enforcement and the limitations of KCC's Moving Traffic Enforcement Power which cannot currently support the exemption of blue badge holders. Specific funding would also need to be sourced to pursue this option.
- 4.2 Another option would be to do nothing and to leave the Town Centre parking unenforceable. In light of the previous request and comments from the Town Centre Working Group this is not considered to be viable.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Should a Traffic Regulation Order be progressed, this would include a formal consultation in line with the statutory requirements.
- 5.2 Should more than 5 formal objections be received to the Traffic Regulation Order, these would be reported back to the Swale JTB in June 2025 for Members to consider. If less than 5 formal objections are received, the Kent County Council Cabinet Member can consider these objections outside of the JTB.
- 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	Cost of drafting Traffic Regulation Order. If progressed, cost of installing lining. Cost of Sealing Traffic Regulation Order by Kent County Council.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Formal consultation of Traffic Regulation Order.

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. The proposed double yellow lines 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 Annex A – Plan of Proposed Double Yellow Lines

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