



Faversham Town Council

Business Support Report
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Director

People and Places Insight Limited



Executive Summary

POSITIVE

Stable or Increasing Business Performance

- ❖ 44% of Businesses reported that over the next 12 months 'Turnover' would 'Stay the Same' whilst 41% expected it to 'Increase'.
- ❖ 39% of Businesses reported that over the last 12 months 'Turnover' had 'Stayed the Same' whilst 38% stated it had 'Increased'.
- ❖ 37% of Businesses reported that over the last 12 months 'Profitability' had 'Stayed the Same' whilst 34% stated it had 'Increased'.

Town Centre Based Events

- ❖ 47% of Businesses felt that the 'Best of Markets' town centre based events were either 'Very Good' (27%) or 'Good' (20%) for their trade.
- ❖ 34% of respondents rated the 'Hop Festival' as 'Very Good' for their own business with another 10% providing a rating of 'Good'.
- ❖ 'Christmas Lights' (41%), 'Transport Weekend' (40%) and 'Themed Markets' (38%) were rated as 'Very Good' or 'Good' for individual Businesses trade.
- ❖ 50% rated the 'Food Festival' as 'Good' for their Business
- ❖ The main pattern to emerge was that Businesses rated the town centre based events as positive for wider Faversham Business community. 80% of Businesses rated the 'Hop Festival' as either 'Very Good' (59%) or 'Good' (21%), 72% rating the 'Transport Weekend' as 'Very Good/ Good' and the same figure rating 'Best of Markets' as 'Very Good/ Good'. 'Christmas Lights' (69%), 'Themed Markets' (69%), 'Charter Markets' (65%) also received very positive ratings.

Promotions/ Marketing

- ❖ In terms of positive responses concerning how promotions/ marketing activities have helped the individual businesses, 43% rated 'Social Media' as either 'Very Good' (23%) or 'Good' (20%) whilst 42% rated 'Visit Faversham' as 'Good'.
- ❖ In terms of positive responses concerning how promotions/ marketing activities have helped the wider Faversham businesses, 61% rated 'Visit Faversham' as either 'Good' (11%) or 'Very Good' (50%) whilst 52% rated 'Social Media' as 'Good' or 'Very Good' (19%).

Business Support

- ❖ Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Businesses reported that they had received support through 'Networking Events' and 49% 'Faversham Business Partnership Training'. From those who received support via 'Networking Events', 56% rated these as either 'Good' (39%) or 'Very Good' (17%). In terms of the 'Faversham Business Partnership Training' 40% rated this as 'OK' and the same figure as either 'Good' (27%) or 'Very Good' (13%).

NEGATIVE

Town Centre Based Events for individual Businesses

- ❖ In terms of negative ratings, 52% of respondents rated 'Proms in the Market Place' as either 'Poor' (33%) or 'Very Poor'. (19%)
- ❖ 50% of respondents rated the 'Carnival' as either 'Very Poor' (29%) or 'Poor'. (21%)
- ❖ 49% of respondents rated the 'Hat Festival' as 'Poor' (28%) or 'Very Poor'. (28%)
- ❖ 31% of Businesses indicated that the 'Hop Festival' was 'Very Poor' with another 7% providing a rating of 'Poor'.
- ❖ 39% of Businesses also rated the 'Walking Tours' as 'Very Poor/ Poor'.

Promotions/ Marketing

- ❖ In terms of negative responses concerning how promotions/ marketing activities have helped the individual businesses, 73% rated 'Reward Card' as either 'Very Poor' (47%) or 'Poor' (26%) whilst 64% rated 'KM Advert run by FBP' as 'Poor' (45%) or 'Very Poor' (19%) and 54% 'Meet the Buyer' as 'Very Poor' (33%) or 'Poor' (21%).
- ❖ In terms of negative responses concerning how promotions/ marketing activities have helped the individual businesses, 43% rated 'Reward Card' as either 'Very Poor' (23%) or 'Poor' (20%).

MOVING FORWARD

- ❖ 96% of respondents indicated that they wanted to see business support offered to Faversham businesses over the next 5 years.
- ❖ 33% of respondents chose 'Business Clinics' (tailored mentoring and advice sessions for individual businesses) as the 'First Priority' for business support delivery over the next 5 years in Faversham with 31% choosing 'Workshops' (short, interactive and themed sessions, tailored to a group of businesses) and 25% 'Peer to peer support' (networking and exchange of experiences with other businesses)

- ❖ 55% of respondents chose 'Sales and Marketing' as their 'First Priority' for the business support subject that they would like to see offered to Faversham businesses over the next 5 years, 30% also chose this option as their 'Second Priority'.
- ❖ 38% of respondents indicated that 'Faversham Town Council' would be their 'First Priority' for the organisation to deliver business support in Faversham over the next 5 years with 25% also choosing this as their 'Second Priority'.
- ❖ 33% of respondents chose 'Swale Borough Council' as their 'First Priority' for the organisation to deliver business support in Faversham over the next 5 years with 25% also choosing this as their 'Second Priority'.
- ❖ From those respondents who had not received Business Support over the last 5 years, the main reasons were that they were either not aware the support was available or that they felt it was not needed.

Introduction

People and Places Insight Limited are an organization whom strive to improve the performance of localities through a series of well used and advanced Town Centre Solutions. People and Places Insight have worked with National Government, Business Improvement Districts, Local Authorities, Town Councils, Community and Town Partnerships and Retailers on a wide range of projects including;

- ❖ Town Benchmarking
- ❖ Business Support Reviews
- ❖ First Time Visitor Reviews
- ❖ Signage and Wayfinding Reviews
- ❖ Footfall Counting
- ❖ Event Evaluation
- ❖ Visitor Satisfaction Surveys
- ❖ Car Parking Strategies
- ❖ Partnership Development and Training
- ❖ Neighbourhood Planning

Mike King is Director of People and Places Insight Limited and offers a vast amount of experience in research and regeneration projects in both the public and private sector. People and Places boast a nationwide team of trained researchers who conduct fieldwork.

Methodology

A survey for Faversham based Business to complete was designed in conjunction with Faversham Town Council to gather information on;

- ❖ Performance
- ❖ Ratings of Town Centre Based Events
- ❖ Ratings of Promotions and Marketing
- ❖ Ratings of Business Support

All ground floor businesses in the defined town centre area received a hard copy of the survey with a freepost envelope, whilst all other businesses either Home-Based or in one of the Business/ Industrial Parks received the survey via email or as a hyperlink.

In total 75 surveys were completed by Businesses. The following Key Findings Section is based on the structure of the Faversham Business Survey 2017.

Key Findings

BUSINESS INFORMATION

Where is your business located?	%
Faversham Town Centre Based	41
Home Based in Faversham	30
Jubilee Way Trading Estate	5
Upper Brents Trading Estate	3
Standard Quay	1
Brogdale	1
Macknade	1
Graveney Road Business Park	1
The Foundry Business Park	0
John Hall Close Trading Estate	1
Western Link	1
Other	14

41% of Business respondents are based in 'Faversham Town Centre', whilst 30% are 'Home-Based in Faversham'.

What is the nature of your business?	%
Retail	21
Financial/ Professional Services	21
Food and Drink	9
Accommodation	4
Other	46

46% of Businesses reported that the nature of their work was 'Other', comments from those who provided this classification included;

❖ <i>Venue/ Community Centre</i>
❖ <i>Cinema</i>
❖ <i>Education</i>
❖ <i>Tourism Consultancy</i>
❖ <i>Therapy and Clinic Rooms</i>
❖ <i>Design and Manufacturer of Furniture and Interior Products</i>
❖ <i>Heritage Attraction</i>
❖ <i>marketing, design and copywriting</i>

❖ <i>Graphics/illustration service and retail markets</i>
❖ <i>Cleaning/Retail/Lgv Driving</i>
❖ <i>Visitor Attraction</i>
❖ <i>Tourism sailing trips from Whitstable Harbour</i>
❖ <i>Discount Club</i>
❖ <i>One off</i>
❖ <i>Freelance</i>
❖ <i>Sail and Cover makers</i>
❖ <i>Health</i>
❖ <i>transport</i>
❖ <i>Artist</i>
❖ <i>Animal attraction</i>
❖ <i>Health and wellness services and products</i>
❖ <i>Health / Optician</i>
❖ <i>Arts and crafts provider. Workshops, parties and event entertainment</i>
❖ <i>Social Media</i>
❖ <i>retail mobility/disabled equipment</i>
❖ <i>Electrician</i>
❖ <i>Architecture</i>
❖ <i>Manufacturing/Retail</i>
❖ <i>Storage</i>
❖ <i>Driving tuition</i>
❖ <i>Web design & Photography</i>
❖ <i>Food, drink and accomodation</i>
❖ <i>Arts and Culture Organisation</i>
❖ <i>manufacturing</i>

What type of business are you?	%
Multiple Trader	5
Regional	3
Independent	92

92% of Business respondents are 'Independent'.

Does your business receive business rate relief?	%
Yes	44
No	56

Over half (56%) of respondents do not receive business rate relief.

How long has your business been in Faversham?	%
Less than a year	12
One to Five years	28
Six to Ten years	20
More than Ten years	41

41% of Businesses had been based in Faversham for 'More than Ten Years'.

Compared to last year has your turnover?	%
Increased	38
Stayed the same	39
Decreased	23

39% of Businesses reported that over the last 12 months 'Turnover' had 'Stayed the Same' whilst 38% stated it had 'Increased'.

Compared to last year has your profitability?	%
Increased	34
Stayed the same	37
Decreased	29

37% of Businesses reported that over the last 12 months 'Turnover' had 'Stayed the Same' whilst 34% stated it had 'Increased'.

Over the next 12 months do you think your turnover will...?	%
Increase	41
Stay the same	44
Decrease	14

44% of Businesses reported that over the next 12 months 'Turnover' would 'Stay the Same' whilst 41% expected it to 'Increase'.

Which one of the options best describes your customer base?	%
Faversham Residents	16
Customers living within 10 miles of Faversham	23
Customers living 10 to 30 miles from Faversham	20
Customers based all over the country	23
Other	17

39% of Businesses indicated that their customer base was made up of those living in a 10-mile radius of Faversham. 23% stated that they had 'Customers based all over the country' whilst 20% stated their customer base was mainly those living 10-30 miles from Faversham.

What are the positive aspects of having a business located in the Faversham area?	%
Physical appearance	44
Prosperity of the town	25
Labour pool	7
Geographical location	59
Mix of retail offer	15
Potential tourist customers	33
Potential local customers	59
Affordable housing	3
Transport links	51
Footfall	10
Car parking	16
Rental values/ Property costs	13
Market(s)	31
Events/ Activities	38
Marketing/ Promotions	11
Local Partnership/ Organisations	28
Other	20

Over half of Businesses indicated that ‘Geographical location’ (59%), ‘Potential local customers’ (59%) and ‘Transport Links’ (51%) were positive aspects of trading from the Faversham area. 44% reported that ‘Physical appearance’ was a positive aspect and 38% ‘Events/Activities’.

What are the negative aspects of having a business located in the Faversham area?	%
Physical appearance	9
Prosperity of the town	9
Labour pool	12
Geographical location	2
Mix of retail offer	24
Number of Vacant Units	22
Potential tourist customers	0
Potential local customers	0
Affordable housing	19
Transport links	4
Footfall	17
Car parking	39
Rental values/ Property costs	20
Market(s)	6
Local business competition	22
Competition from other localities	19
Competition from out of town shopping	26
Competition from internet	30
Events/ Activities	2
Marketing/ Promotions	4
Local Partnership/ Organisations	6
Other	22

39 of Businesses indicated that 'Car Parking' was a negative aspect of trading from the Faversham area. Competition in the form of 'the internet' (30%) and 'out of town shopping' (26) were also classed as negative aspects alongside town centre issues such as 'Mix of retail offer' (24%) and 'Number of Vacant Units' (22%).

Evaluation of Town Centre Events

In terms of the benefit to your own business, how would you rate the following town centre based events?

	Very Good %	Good %	OK %	Poor %	Very Poor %
Hat Festival	7	17	28	28	21
Transport Weekend	4	36	32	18	11
Proms in the Market Place	4	15	30	33	19
Open House and Gardens	3	24	34	21	17
Nautical Festival	7	18	29	29	18
Hop Festival	34	10	18	7	31
Food Festival	0	50	25	25	0
Carnival	7	11	32	21	29
Christmas Lights	22	19	37	4	19
Charter Markets	10	7	52	14	17
Best of Markets	27	20	37	3	13
Themed Markets (Midsummer, Christmas etc)	17	21	34	10	17
Walking Tours	14	18	25	25	18

34% of respondents rated the 'Hop Festival' as 'Very Good' for their own business with another 10% providing a rating of 'Good'. 47% of Businesses felt that the 'Best of Markets' town centre based events were either 'Very Good' (27%) or 'Good' (20%) for their trade. Other events which were classed as 'Very Good/ Good' were 'Christmas Lights' (41%), 'Transport Weekend' 40% and 'Themed Markets' 38%. 50% rated the 'Food Festival' as 'Good' for their Business.

In the majority of the town centre based events the 'OK' rating by the Businesses was the most predominant.

In terms of negative ratings, 52% of respondents rated 'Proms in the Market Place' as either 'Poor' (33%) or 'Very Poor' (19%) for their Business whilst half of respondents rated the 'Carnival' as either 'Very Poor' (29%) or 'Poor' (21%). 49% of respondents rated the 'Hat Festival' as 'Poor' (28%) or 'Very Poor' (28%) for their Business and 31% indicated that the 'Hop Festival' was 'Very Poor' with another 7% providing a rating of 'Poor'. 39% of Businesses also rated the 'Walking Tours' as 'Very Poor/ Poor'.

In terms of the benefit to the wider Faversham business community, how would you rate the following town centre based events?

	Very Good %	Good %	OK %	Poor %	Very Poor %
Hat Festival	24	21	38	10	7
Transport Weekend	34	38	21	7	0
Proms in the Market Place	25	25	39	7	4
Open House and Gardens	31	14	41	14	0
Nautical Festival	28	24	45	3	0
Hop Festival	59	21	14	3	31
Food Festival	12	28	44	14	0
Carnival	14	31	41	10	3
Christmas Lights	38	31	31	0	0
Charter Markets	29	36	25	11	0
Best of Markets	34	38	21	7	0
Themed Markets (Midsummer, Christmas etc)	31	38	28	3	0
Walking Tours	24	31	34	10	0

The main pattern to emerge was that Businesses rated the town centre based events as positive for wider Faversham Business community. 80% of Businesses rated the 'Hop Festival' as either 'Very Good' (59%) or 'Good' (21%), 72% rating the 'Transport Weekend' as 'Very Good/ Good' and the same figure rating 'Best of Markets' as 'Very Good/ Good'. 'Christmas Lights' (69%), 'Themed Markets' (69%), 'Charter Markets' (65%) also received very positive ratings.

Evaluation of Promotions/ Marketing

In terms of the benefit to your own business, how would you rate the following promotions/ marketing activities?

	Very Good %	Good %	OK %	Poor %	Very Poor %
Reward Card	0	6	21	26	47
Meet the Buyer	6	18	21	21	33
Faversham.org	9	15	41	21	15
KM Advert run by FBP	3	13	19	45	19
Visit Faversham	3	42	33	17	6
Sponsorship opportunities with Festivals	12	18	35	18	18
Social Media	23	20	40	6	11

In terms of positive responses concerning how promotions/ marketing activities have helped the individual businesses, 43% rated 'Social Media' as either 'Very Good' (23%) or 'Good' (20%) whilst 42% rated 'Visit Faversham' as 'Good'.

In most categories the highest proportion of respondents rated the promotions and marketing as 'OK'.

In terms of negative responses concerning how promotions/ marketing activities have helped the individual businesses, 73% rated 'Reward Card' as either 'Very Poor' (47%) or 'Poor' (26%) whilst 64% rated 'KM Advert run by FBP' as 'Poor' (45%) or 'Very Poor' (19%) and 54% 'Meet the Buyer' as 'Very Poor' (33%) or 'Poor' (21%).

In terms of the benefit to the wider business community, how would you rate the following promotions/ marketing activities?

	Very Good %	Good %	OK %	Poor %	Very Poor %
Reward Card	6	26	26	20	23
Meet the Buyer	6	18	39	12	24
Faversham.org	12	26	41	12	9
KM Advert run by FBP	3	19	44	22	13
Visit Faversham	11	50	25	8	6
Sponsorship opportunities with Festivals	14	22	39	19	6
Social Media	19	32	38	8	3

In terms of positive responses concerning how promotions/ marketing activities have helped the wider Faversham businesses, 61% rated 'Visit Faversham' as either 'Good' (11%) or 'Very Good' (50%) whilst 52% rated 'Social Media' as 'Good' or 'Very Good' (19%).

In most categories the highest proportion of respondents rated the promotions and marketing as 'OK'.

In terms of negative responses concerning how promotions/ marketing activities have helped the individual businesses, 43% rated 'Reward Card' as either 'Very Poor' (23%) or 'Poor' (20%).

Business Support

Over the last 5 years have you received any business support? E.g. Training, Networking Events, Marketing Support, Financial Advice.	%
Yes	48
No	52

There was nearly an even split in terms of Businesses who have received Business Support over the last five years. 52% of respondents indicated that they had not received any Business Support with 48% of respondents stating they had.

Why have you not received any business support over the last 5 years?

The comments below highlight that the key themes were that respondents were either not aware that Business Support was available or that they felt it was not needed.

❖ Not found it if any use
❖ Never had it offered!!
❖ I have not been advised
❖ Never looked into it and would not know where to start
❖ Because I have not asked for it
❖ Not needed
❖ I don't think anything is on offer.
❖ I secure support outside the town
❖ not needed
❖ I didn't ask for it! Not eligible/suitable offer for a sole trader?
❖ Only started April 2017
❖ Never asked for it, and feel it would not be relevant
❖ Not aware of what is available
❖ Didn't know what was available
❖ Don't need it - I know what i'm doing!
❖ It has not been required
❖ Haven't really dealt that anything offered was particularly relevant to our sector.
❖ We are a new business
❖ no one is interested in small independent retailer.
❖ Didn't know who to ask
❖ Not necessary
❖ Not offered or sought (I don't count networking events as support)

- ❖ *None came my way, that are suited to my requirements.*
- ❖ *Did not realise that I was able to request this.*

Over the last 5 years, which of the following types of business support have you received?	%
Faversham Business Partnership training	39
Swale Means Business workshops	25
Networking Events	64
Advice/ Support/ Training from a Bank	14
Advice/ Support/ Training from an Accountant	25
Other	14

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Businesses reported that they had received support through ‘Networking Events’ and 49% ‘Faversham Business Partnership Training’.

From those who received support via ‘Networking Events’, 56% rated these as either ‘Good’ (39%) or ‘Very Good’ (17%). In terms of the ‘Faversham Business Partnership Training’ 40% rated this as ‘OK’ and the same figure as either ‘Good’ (27%) or ‘Very Good’ (13%).

In terms of why the ‘Networking Events’ were rated as either ‘Very Good’ or ‘Good’ comments included;

- ❖ *There is a wide variety of network meetings in and around Faversham*
- ❖ *Meeting new customers and business owners.*
- ❖ *FTA excellent*
- ❖ *Good for self-promotion and getting to know what others in the town do*
- ❖ *Training on skills i needed to tun my business*
- ❖ *The local networking meetings, such as Kent Creative Arts events, have been very positive and welcoming.*
- ❖ *It's the basics of business. It's all about people.*
- ❖ *always good to discuss business with peers*

Would you like to see business support offered to Faversham businesses over the next 5 years?	%
Yes	96
No	4

96% of respondents indicated that they wanted to see business support offered to Faversham businesses over the next 5 years.



Which of the following types of business support delivery would you like to see offered to Faversham businesses over the next 5 years?	Priority 1 %	Priority 2 %	Priority 3 %
Workshops (short, interactive and themed sessions, tailored to a group of businesses)	31	25	17
Business Clinics (tailored mentoring and advice sessions for individual businesses)	33	21	19
Business Breakfasts (regular networking events with short presentations on key issues)	15	10	31
Project-based support (tailored support and training over a longer period e.g. marketing)	13	35	10
Peer to peer support (networking and exchange of experiences with other businesses)	25	15	25
On-Line Training Modules (packages of self-guided tutorials and interactive webinars)	17	13	19
Training Courses leading to Formal Qualifications	13	15	21

33% of respondents chose 'Business Clinics' (tailored mentoring and advice sessions for individual businesses) as the 'First Priority' for business support delivery over the next 5 years in Faversham with 31% choosing 'Workshops' (short, interactive and themed sessions, tailored to a group of businesses and 25% 'Peer to peer support' (networking and exchange of experiences with other businesses).

Other suggestions included;

❖ <i>The new FTA is excellent and look like it will become a great help and voice for local business!</i>
❖ <i>Marketing</i>
❖ <i>After work networking events</i>
❖ <i>Growth support especially with planning issues (1st). Local jobs for local people</i>
❖ <i>Mastermind groups. And crucially collaborations.</i>

Which of the following business support subjects would you like to see offered to Faversham businesses over the next 5 years?	Priority 1 %	Priority 2 %	Priority 3 %
Health and Safety	13	17	23
Sales and Marketing	55	30	9
Administration and Accounting	23	34	9
Customer Service	20	0	0
Human Resources	6	17	28
Staff Development and Supervision	11	19	26
Professional Development	19	23	26

55% of respondents chose 'Sales and Marketing' as their 'First Priority' for the business support subject that they would like to see offered to Faversham businesses over the next 5 years, 30% also chose this as their 'Second Priority'.

23% of respondents chose 'Accounting and Administration' as their 'First Priority' with 34% as their 'Second Priority.'

Which of the following organisations do you think should deliver business support in Faversham over the next 5 years?	Priority 1 %	Priority 2 %	Priority 3 %
Faversham Town Council	38	25	15
Swale Borough Council	33	25	17
Traders Group	17	19	31
Business Improvement District	4	21	15
Kent and Medway Growth Hub	8	17	17
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce	15	21	13
Canterbury City Council	0	13	8
Private Company	13	4	17

38% of respondents indicated that 'Faversham Town Council' would be their 'First Priority' for the organisation to deliver business support in Faversham over the next 5 years with 25% also choosing this as their 'Second Priority'.

33% of respondents chose 'Swale Borough Council' as their 'First Priority' for the organisation to deliver business support in Faversham over the next 5 years with 25% also choosing this as their 'Second Priority'.

Are there any other organisations which you think should deliver business support in Faversham over the next 5 years?

Comments included:

❖ <i>Groups that run events can help local businesses understand how to make the most of their event</i>
❖ <i>Only organisations with professional qualifications to perform whatever training</i>
❖ <i>Britestar- http://britestar.co.uk</i>
❖ <i>Joint marketing initiatives</i>
❖ <i>Metis Women FSB</i>
❖ <i>Think it could be delivered by any of previous bodies via established networks e.g. business partnership, market cooperative, Kent creative</i>
❖ <i>Experience business operatives, that were able to retire early, or run multi business. Such as me</i>
❖ <i>Peak Performance Business Coaching. They have the knowledge and resources - but most importantly they want to see Faversham business owners grow their business, and make money, and will help in any way possible to achieve this</i>
❖ <i>Business coaches... I think your questions covers everything in the 'Private company' section</i>
❖ <i>I believe it is a combination of efforts - the state i.e. council should be funding and proving the support whilst other bodies should be delivering it</i>