

Additional statement from Faversham Town Council's Active Travel Committee to support Town Council's current objection to Duchy of Cornwall application 23/505533/EIHYB

Summary

Faversham Town Council formally objects to the Duchy of Cornwall's planning application 23/505533/EIHYB on the basis that the active and sustainable travel proposals will not deliver the stated objectives of minimising car use arising from the development. In particular, there are no plans either to address the severance caused by the railway lines or to provide an improved bus service in the area.

Background

Faversham Town Council Planning Committee endorsed a report by Railton Ltd on the travel aspects of the Duchy of Cornwall (DoC) planning application and submitted this to the SBC Planning portal in June 2024. This raised concerns that the severance caused by, in particular, the A2 and the railways lines, had not been addressed. The DoC has not yet responded formally to that submission from FTC.

A review of the DoC development proposals on the Swale Borough Council planning portal as at June 2025 identified several new documents that relevant (directly or indirectly) to the transport links between the development and Faversham town centre. These include submissions from various stakeholders: KCC Highways and KCC PROW, National Highways, Active Travel England, Boughton Parish Council and, in particular, the DoC's Transport Vision statement (February 2025).

The Transport Vision statement includes the key phrases, such as:

"Physical integration with existing urban area is critical..."

"Key priority...resilient networks...healthy modes of transport..."

In order to meet these objectives, the DoC proposals intend to increase walking and cycling within the development. However, outside the development, while the Transport Vision partly addresses the A2 severance issue identified in the Railton report, it does not adequately deal with the severance caused by the railways.

A2 severance

The severance issues are twofold:

- 1) Lack of crossings / active travel infrastructure
- 2) Environmental and safety concerns for those walking and cycling due to traffic speed and volume

While the new exit planned to meet the A251 south of Tettenhall Way may prove some mitigation for the above in providing access to and from Perry Court or the Abbey School, most of the intended exits for pedestrians and cyclists from the development are still onto the A2.

Issue 1 is addressed reasonably well: the planned interventions are on the list of A2 improvements identified in FTC's LCWIP.

- 1) While shared use walking and cycling 3m wide pavement infrastructure on the north of the A2 might be reasonable in the short term, the lack of segregation is not sustainable for the

medium term. We request that the DoC work with KCC Highways to find a better, more sustainable solution.

- 2) With the caveat that detailed work is continuing on designs for the A2 crossings, these seem to be sufficient and in the right locations for those wishing to walk or cycle on the new, wider pavement.
- 3) The crossings should prioritise those walking and cycling, with induction loops to trigger red signals for motor vehicles with little / no delay to pedestrians and cycling.
- 4) We support the implementation on most of the junctions on the north side of the A2 of continuous pavements and narrower junction radii in order to slow motor vehicle movements in and out of the side roads.

Within issue 2:

- Reducing the carriageway width to 6m in order to accommodate the new 3m pavement on the north of the A2 will help to reduce motor vehicle speeds and enable a 20mph speed limit to be introduced.
- The lack of segregation of pedestrians and cyclists away from motor vehicles means that environmental and safety concerns will remain because of the volume of traffic. While the DoC development is aimed at minimising any increase in motor vehicles along the A2, it has not presented plans to reduce the existing volume of motor vehicles, particularly HGVs.
- Consider bringing forward the industrial area sooner, in order to alleviate the volume of commercial vehicles using the Western Link and the A2 and to enable the A2 to become more suitable for active travel.

We do not yet comment on the changes to the Love Lane junction, which is currently not convenient for cyclists and pedestrians, as work is continuing on its design.

Railway severance

Nothing in the proposal addresses the severance caused by the railway lines, a key issue for Faversham Town Council.

- **Pedestrian bridge linking the development to the recreation ground and to the new East-West walking route:** The proposed feasibility study for improving the bridge is limited in scope and falls short of the LCWIP's objective of making it a truly accessible crossing for those walking or cycling. As key active travel desire line, the feasibility study needs to contain a detailed specification and design supported by a deliverable financial and implementation plan is needed to ensure that adequate improvements are achieved at this location.
- **Bridge over the railway at St Catherine's and the underpasses at the station and Forbes Road:** The proposals are minor and do not address accessibility issues for those walking or cycling. A solution is needed for the severance issue near the railway station. This could include reconsideration of a plan to redevelop the area around the railway station to include access over the railway line.

- In both cases, land ownerships should be confirmed. The DoC is requested to negotiate with those owners to establish the feasibility of designs.

Additional recommendation

We understand that new guidance from Active Travel England on designing active travel interventions in more rural areas is available in draft. We recommend that this guidance is reviewed and applied, particularly for connections to Boughton and Selling. In this respect, we request the DoC to take note of a report on Active Travel entitled “Parishes to Town”, which describes proposals for active travel connections between Faversham and the surrounding villages. Faversham Town Council intends to adopt this report on as an appendix to its existing LCWIP.

We note the current assumption that providing an adequate active travel connection between Faversham and Boughton (and onwards to Canterbury) requires the A2 junction 7 at Brenley Corner to be redeveloped. It should be a condition of any approved application that an active travel scheme is either delivered at Brenley Corner or, failing that, an acceptable alternative solution is provided.

Public Transport

Without a firm and funded plan for improved bus service and routes for the area, the DoC’s stated objectives of lower car use risk not being realised. We would be concerned if existing buses that use Love Lane had to do additional loops around the new development and thereby slow the journey times between Faversham and Canterbury.

Appendix: List of most relevant transport planning related documents identified to date. Awaiting updated list from DoC

DoC's transport Vision 24th February 2025 (latest iteration)

Has responded to NH and KCC comments. Key statements of Transport vision include:

"Physical integration with existing urban area is critical..."

"Key priority...resilient networks...healthy modes of transport..."

Report from Bruce Bamber, Railton, 24th June 2024 commissioned by Faversham Town Council

Critical of DoC transport plans – no response seen from DoC

KCC PROW comment 29th April 2025

Objection withdrawn. Is KCC PROW aware of the new draft guidance on active travel from ATE? It doesn't seem to have referenced the Parishes to Town recommendations. nor the Neighbourhood Plan.

Boughton PC comment 9th May 2025

Requesting s106 funding. The PC is not asking for money for active travel connections to the village. Has it considered the Parishes to Town report and/or have there been discussions with KCC PROW?

Active Travel England comment 3rd April 2025

Not supporting DoC proposals as currently laid out. No response from DoC as yet

National Highways 31st March 2025

Expressing concerns about proposal. No response to the latest from DoC, although it has responded in the past