

South East Faversham development proposal 23/505533/EIHYB

Introduction

In July 2025 the Committee submitted a paper to the Swale Planning Portal supporting the Town Council's current objection to the South East Faversham development proposal 23/505533/EIHYB.

The basis of this was that the active and sustainable travel proposals would not deliver the Duchy of Cornwall's stated objectives of minimising car use arising from the development. In particular, there were no serious plans to minimise car use for journeys to Faversham by addressing the severance issues for pedestrians and cyclists caused by the railway lines or to provide an improved bus service for the area.

Our view of the importance of this issue is supported by the submissions made by Highways England which state that action is needed to support a modal shift away from car travel if the UK is to achieve net zero carbon status by 2050 and the NPPF which advises that appropriate opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport should be taken up. It is also supported by the external consultancy report we commissioned and a large number of submissions from the public, which point out that the development as currently proposed will contribute to significant increases in traffic congestion.

Meeting with Duchy of Cornwall November

The Committee Chair and Vice Chair and the Town Clerk were offered a meeting on 12 November 2025 to discuss these concerns and to hear the Duchy of Cornwall's latest proposals for improving public transport from the development.

During the meeting we were told that in relation to:

1. carrying out a feasibility study for a new pedestrian bridge linking the development to the recreation ground which contains 'a detailed specification and design supported by a deliverable financial and implementation plan' and which is 'based on negotiations with owners of neighbouring land to establish the feasibility of designs' as we had proposed, they did not have funding to do more than the small scale review of lighting and bridge safety that they currently have planned.
2. bus routes, they are proposing to provide a subsidy of up to £1 million towards an hourly six day a week bus service through the development for the period of the

build out. There were a number of caveats to this. In relation to increasing the frequency of this service their argument was that this would not be economic because usage research analysis suggests it will not generate enough additional passengers to cover increased costs.

Neither of these responses seem an adequate response to our concerns about the volume of additional traffic congestion the development will cause and it is now appropriate for the committee to consider additional steps that it can take to ensure the Duchy does more to encourage the use of active travel and public transport for journeys from the development to the town centre. With the application due to be determined in the imminent future these steps will need to be taken promptly.

The most obvious action that we can propose is probably, that if the SBC Planning Committee is minded to approve the application, it imposes conditions on the developer in relation to the two major concerns that we have.

Proposal

That the Committee discuss and decide whether it wants to make :

1. A fresh submission proposing that conditions are placed on the developer if the application is agreed in relation to

- funding a proper feasibility study on a new pedestrian bridge across the railway lines to the Recreation Ground
- and a higher frequency bus service from the development to the Town Centre.

2. Write to members of the Planning Committee on its concerns about increased car use, encouraging them to propose and support the inclusion of these conditions in any planning approval given.