

PROPOSED HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS TO SOUTH STREET, DEAL

To: Dover Joint Transportation Board - 10 September 2015

By: Tim Read - Head of Transportation

Classification: For Recommendation

Ward: Deal North Ward

Summary: This report provides an update on the progress to change the direction of traffic flow on South Street together with installing 3 Bus Stops on the northern side of South Street.

This report identifies the issues raised as part of the consultation together with the Officer responses to the points raised and recommends a further consultation on alternative proposals following substantial objections.

1 Introduction

1.1 Existing Arrangement

South Street is an extremely busy area fronted by a number of small businesses generating a high number of pedestrian and vehicular movements all times of the day. South Street is currently one-way travelling East to West and is approximately 15m in width with little designation for its multiple users. The road space is filled with a mix of pedestrians, cyclists, cars, taxis and multiple sized delivery vehicles and buses.

South Street acts as a main focal point for buses in the Deal area with many services terminating and connecting thus laying over here. Given the importance of South Street as 'bus hub', buses (Including Stagecoach, National Express and School buses) often park 2 or 3 abreast in South Street, causing both congestions and concerns to highway safety for all road users. During certain times of the day when multiple buses are in South Street, pedestrians are forced to walk in the carriageway between parked vehicles including buses. The situation in South Street is far from ideal and although the crash record is relatively low, issues over pedestrian safety and the encouragement of sustainable transport use have come into dispute.

1.2 Proposed aims and objectives

The proposals for improvement in South Street can be summarised as:

- Improve pedestrian facilities and reduce the carriageway width
- Improve pedestrian, bus user and general road safety
- Rationalise the conflict between the various users by reallocating road space
- Encourage the use of sustainable travel by providing bus interchange improvements
- Improve on street Bus facilities
- Provide for Taxi's, loading, buses, through traffic and passing trade
- Improvement to the street scene
- To reiterate, the proposals are to improve the services for residents and passengers of Deal as set out in the Dover Quality Bus Partnership Group.

1.3 Proposed alterations to achieve the aims and objectives

Kent County Council has received funding to provide improvements on South Street for all road users. Below is a summary of the proposals that can be seen in Appendix A:

- Reversing flow of traffic on South Street allowing buses to align on the northern carriageway closer to key destination points reducing the necessity to cross the wide carriageway
- Footway widening to the northern footway
- Taxi Bays to be installed on the southern side of South Street closer to the Taxi business located on South Street
- Improved Crossing Facilities on South Street for all road users
- Improved Street Scene for South Street including resurfacing of footways
- Provision of a loading bay on South Street to be utilised by local businesses on a daily basis

2 – South Street Alterations Consultation

2.1 Consultation on proposals

The consultation started on 16/07/2015 and ended 14/08/2015. Letters were dropped to the businesses and residents on South Street together with erecting notices on site identifying the proposals to residents, businesses and road users. Kent County Council also undertook an exhibition held at the Deal Town Hall in Deal allowing residents and businesses to comment on proposals.

Kent County Council has received **118 objections to the scheme**, below is a summary of issues raised during the consultation period together with comments to overcome some of the said concerns.

- **Increased traffic using Middle Street** – *As a result of changing the direction of traffic, vehicles will have the ability to use Middle Street to access Broad Street. Middle Street is a One Way road of single carriageway width. The objections raise concerns with regard to increased noise, pollution and potential structural damage to properties. These concerns could be reduced by installing traffic movement restrictions on Middle Street or reversing the One-Way traffic flow.*

Officer Recommendations – This can be eradicated by installing traffic restrictions or reversing the One Way directional flow of traffic.

- **Relocation of Taxi Bays** – *The relocation of the existing taxi bays has caused a number of objections. To clarify, there are a number of taxi/private hire companies who use South Street. By relocating the taxi bays to the proposed location on the drawing it would be in close proximity to Deal Cars (Private Hire Company). This is not the only Private Hire Company who operates on South Street therefore by siting the taxi bays here could be at the detriment to other businesses. Likewise, Deal Cars would be unfavourable promoting the use of rival companies outside their premises.*

Officer Recommendations – Review the location of proposed Taxi Bays

- **Installation of Bus Stops** – *Providing 3 Bus Stops to allow improvements for public transport has proven unfavourable to many businesses located on South Street. Given the proposed*

location of the bus stops, the buses waiting at the Bus Stops have raised pollution concerns for local businesses. Particularly when customers are sitting outside using cafeterias, it is perceived that it will cause a loss of business.

Officer Recommendation – Review the location of the proposed Bus Stops

- **Increased Pedestrian movements** – *It was identified that many elderly people tend to use taxis in order get a ‘door to door’ service. The existing taxi rank operates at the western end of South Street in close proximity to the High Street. We have received objections from these customers who will be forced to walk up the hill to get to the top to the taxi rank.*

Officer Recommendations – The same concerns have been raised by users of the Buses hence the proposed scheme. Recommendation is to consult on alternative scheme.

- **Change of direction to traffic flow** – *Kent County Council has received a number of comments regarding the proposed change in the direction of traffic. A main cause of complaint is the increase in traffic using Victoria Road as a result of the amended Bus routes. The proposed route for buses that have historically accessed South Street from the Seafront is to continue along Prince of Charles Terrace into Deal Castle Terrace then turning into Victoria Road and accessing South Street from the western end. This has raised concerns due to the increase of buses travelling on Victoria Road potentially causing traffic congestion.*

Officer Recommendation – Review scheme inclusive of keeping the existing traffic flow

- **Safety Concerns for Pedestrians and Road Users** – *It has been identified that there will be concerns for pedestrian safety, particularly in the vicinity of the bank at the junction of South Street and The High Street. There is a concern that people undertaking withdrawals from Cash Machines will be in close proximity to the Bus Shelters. There have also been safety concerns raised from the Taxi/Private Hire companies, the proposal to relocate the taxi bays facing up the hill in South Street would mean that drivers are unable to see who gets in their vehicle due to the fact that the majority of passengers will be coming from the High Street, this is a major concern for all drivers.*

Deal Town Council have objected to the proposals of the scheme but do acknowledge the fact that minor improvements are needed in South Street and the surrounding area. The Town Council have submitted recommendations which are listed below:

- *Keep the existing traffic flow direction*
- *Retain The exiting Police Bay for safety and security purpose*
- *Increase the carriageway width at the Victoria Road/Sondes Road junction to improve bus accessibility*
- *Review the National Express bus route that operates in the area to try to remove it from South Street*

Kent County Council has received **5 responses proposing not to make any changes** to the existing highway layout.

Many objections have requested that the money allocated to this scheme could be better spent elsewhere in Deal and the surrounding areas. To clarify, this money has been allocated by central government and cannot be used on other projects within the area.

2.2

Kent County Council to date has received **13 letters supporting** the scheme. The key points of support are listed below:

- * Easy access for Buses on South Street from the High Street*
- * Proposals will improve the street scene at South Street*
- * Improved waiting facilities on South Street compared to existing.*

2.3

County Member Mrs Rowbotham supports the proposals for South Street provided it is not at the detriment to the local area. She has identified the need for improvements to the area but not at the detriment to local businesses and residents. She would also like to improve the street scene.

3 Finance

Kent County Council has been allocated funding for improvements at South Street. The funding has been allocated through The Local Growth Fund from Central Government. The budget allocated is £200,000 to improve the highway layout and street scene in South Street for all road users.

4 Conclusions

Given the number of objections received, there is a strong objection to the change in traffic flow. It has been identified that South Street is in need of improving but not at the detriment of local businesses.

As a result of the consultation, Officer Recommendation is not to proceed with the proposed design due to the concerns raised as documented above. A proposed alternative design is shown in Appendix B. The revised design has taken into account suggestions raised by Deal Town Council and comments from consultees. Proposals include retaining the existing traffic flow on South Street together with installing an additional Bus Stop on the southern side of the road; the southern footway will be widened allowing improved access for pedestrians setting the proposed shelters further away from businesses located on South Street. This will make an improvement on the existing highway layout for Buses and Bus Users.

The Taxi Bays are proposed to remain in the same place, with the installation of an additional hard standing area to allow passengers to access the taxi from either side of the vehicle. The northern side of the carriageway will be widened to improve pedestrian accessibility. Footways are proposed to be re-laid to improve to highway appearance together with improving the street scene working with Deal Town Council.

There is a need to undertake improvements on South Street, it is important to improve highway safety that is currently causing concern. With the potential improvements made by public transport companies, it is essential to improve on the existing layout on South Street for all road users.

4 Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

Do not agree to proceed with initial designs following the substantial objections to the consultation and agree to a further consultation on alternative plans shown in Appendix B. KCC will need to work closely with local businesses (including Taxi companies) to firm up proposals prior to consultation which may alter the design of the scheme further.

Should Members wish to proceed with the consultation, it is still the intention to consult, report to the Board (should there be objections) and implement the alternative proposals this financial year.

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Annex List:

Appendix A – South Street Consultation proposals

Appendix B – South Street revised scheme proposals

Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment Form