



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr Monique Bonney
Swale Borough Council
Swale House
Sittingbourne
Kent, ME10 3HT

11 June 2021

Sent by email only to: MoniqueBonney@Swale.gov.uk

Dear Monique,

Please accept this letter as my response to Swale Borough Council's consultation on the future of town centre road closures in the borough.

I'm responding as the Member of Parliament for Faversham and Mid Kent, and my comments relate to the proposals for Faversham town centre.

As you know, there are strong feelings about the road closures in Faversham and a number of my constituents have contacted me about this over the past year.

Like many local authorities across the country, I appreciate Swale Borough Council needed to make difficult decisions during the pandemic. These have often required balancing public health interests with the need to allow normal life to continue as much as possible.

I understand that the road closures in Faversham were introduced last summer to allow for social distancing in the town centre, but there are very real concerns about the impact this is having on businesses and people in the town.

I have heard from businesses that the road closures have made it harder for shops and traders in the town to get deliveries, especially those without rear access to their premises. I have also heard from disabled constituents who have found it harder to access shops and services in the town, and there was the incident earlier this year of the ambulance that was delayed getting into the town.

If road closures are to be maintained after the pandemic, then there needs to be a plan from Swale Borough Council to address these problems. This should include an impact assessment of the current road closures so that decisions can be made as much as possible on the basis of data and evidence.

It's crucial that the Council seeks the broadest possible range of views on these proposals. This should include shops and traders, as well as local GP surgeries and Swale CAB branch. I hope that Swale Borough Council will publish the results of this consultation in full to help inform the public discussion on these proposals.

I encourage the Council to consider all possible options for traffic management on these roads. This should not be limited to whether or not to make the road closures permanent. All possible options should be considered, and I urge Swale Borough Council to work closely with Faversham Town Council and the Faversham Traders Association on these proposals.

More broadly, we need a plan to help Faversham town centre back on its feet after the pandemic. This would be an ideal moment to consider how to improve the space around the closed Iceland store on East Street. I hope that Faversham will be getting its share of the £199,058 allocated to Swale Borough Council from the Government's Welcome Back Fund to help encourage people back to our town centres.

I remain happy to work with you to help Faversham recover from the pandemic.

Best wishes,
Helen

Helen Whately MP
Member of Parliament for Faversham and Mid Kent

www.helenwhately.org.uk

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