

Note

Princes Parade, Hythe

Response to Cllr Rory Love's Evidence in Chief and new Document LTN 1/07

1. This note provides my response to the matters raised by Cllr Rory Love on Friday 22nd October 2021 in his oral Evidence in Chief. I respond principally to his assertion that eastbound vehicles will divert from their current route, using Princes Parade and in the future the new road, if the stopping up and diversion order is granted, to using the A259.
2. Cllr Love cites LTN 1/07 as evidence that vehicles reroute when traffic calming is installed. Page 60 of LTN 1/07 relates to traffic flow. Cllr Love assumes that all the traffic reductions recorded on page 60 are as a result of cars rerouting, whereas the very purpose of the report, as set out in the introduction, is to advise how traffic calming can help encourage walking and cycling as part of wider schemes.
3. Cllr Love does not know if the schemes referred to on page 60 are in any way analogous to Princes Parade and what the alternative routes available are in each case. He ignores the potential that traffic reduction could well have been a design ambition of the schemes, either to more appropriate roads or to other modes such as bus, walk and cycle. This data is for retrospective traffic calming as part of successful schemes to calm traffic on, most likely, residential roads in dense urban areas.
4. The new road that will be provided at Princes Parade is not a retrospective installation of road bumps and speed bumps but a scheme designed from the outset to keep traffic at 30mph with a diversion of just 37m additional journey length. Paragraph 3.3.2 of LTN 1/07 states that "*The self-enforcing measures used to prevent the 85th percentile speed of cars and light vans exceeding 30 mph include 75 mm high flat-top humps with on/off ramp gradients of about 1:15....*" This is in line with what is proposed on the new road.
5. Cllr Love uses an example of residents who live in Hythe and use Princes Parade rather than the A259. He suggests that these residents will, with the new road in place, use the A259, and his main concern is about additional traffic on Twiss Rd, Stade St and Portland Rd and the gyratory as a result of them using alternative routes. I have measured the additional distance that these routes would result in, as set out in Table 1, using a starting point of the junction of South Rd and Stade St.

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Table 1: Eastbound Distance from South Rd and Stade St Junction

28/10/2021

Route (eastbound to A259 Seabrook Rd/Princes Parade Junction)	Length	Difference to Existing
Via New Road	2.9km	+37m
Via Twiss Rd	3.6km	+700m
Via Stade St	3.4km	+500m
Via Portland Rd	4.9km	+2km

6. All of these routes, except for the more congested Stade St, would involve cars driving the wrong way to that which they wish to go. Cllr Love's assertion is that residents would take a significantly longer route, through roundabouts and traffic signals, on the A259 rather than use the existing road. This is highly unlikely. The reference to LTN 1/07 is not relevant as it is improbable that any reductions in traffic referred to on page 60 would have been on the basis that drivers take such a wide detour. I would not be surprised if the reason why this traffic diversion was never discussed at planning committee was that no one on the committee nor the planning officers would have believed that drivers would inconvenience themselves so much just to avoid driving an extra distance of 37m and even if there are some relatively gentle speed tables.

7. Nonetheless, as set out in my Evidence in Chief, Cllr Love's estimate of 80 vehicles rerouting over 3 hours would have minimal impacts on these roads as this is a low volume of traffic. His estimate has no scientific basis and assumes 2/3rds of traffic reroutes. This estimate is still just 27 vehicles an hour, 2 to 3 vehicles a minute, or one every 20 to 30 seconds. This is a low volume of traffic and there is a 20 vehicles daily variation in westbound flow anyway (at 8am on weekdays). In addition, the left turn capacity out of these roads is over 600 vehicles an hour if nothing is coming on the A259, or around 400 when giving way to the traffic recorded on the A259. For Twiss Road there are 160 vehicles performing this manoeuvre an hour, so 187 is still well within what can comfortably be accommodated. All of the 80 vehicles could use Twiss Rd and it would still be O.K.

8. Cllr Love is also dealing with percentages, with no calibrated estimate of what the before and after traffic volumes were. Percentages can be deliberately misleading. Even a 20% reduction in flows, as cited in paragraph 4.4.17 of page 60 of LTN 1/07, would result in some 40 vehicles an hour taking a different route, a different mode or travelling at a slightly different time (peak spreading, which can be just leaving the house 15 or 20min earlier). Even if applied to the A259 this is one vehicle every one and half minutes and less than the daily fluctuation in traffic on a road of this nature and volume of traffic and would not be noticeable.

9. Cllr Love ignored that some traffic calming schemes resulted in an increase, not a decrease, in traffic, and he cited only the very highest increase recorded in his oral evidence, which again does not give a complete picture.
10. In his Evidence in Chief Cllr Love suggested that an alternative Stopping Up order should be considered. It is worth making the point that the distance for a vehicle to drive the 'Alternative' route would be as long as the proposed alignment, have the same number of corners and would still be traffic calmed. Therefore, in terms of his ambition to not inconvenience existing drivers, it would achieve nothing.
11. Lastly, Cllr Love accepted that he was not a highway expert but then continually referred to his "detailed analysis" which, as I have set out above, is incorrect, irrelevant and misleading. I consider that an experienced highway engineer or transport planner would not have made those points, as indeed KCC's highways officers did not when approving the development.
12. The evidence which I have prepared and provide in this note is true and has been prepared in accordance with professional guidelines and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.