

From: Fred Cooper [mailto:]
Sent: 05 October 2021 09:38
To: Programme Officer <Programme.Officer@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: FW: NATTRAN/SE/S247/3254 Stopping Up Order & Public Inquiry - Post Pre-Inquiry Meeting – Objection

Hi,

This document is similar to my previous objections to the stopping up order that I submitted on 6 June 2018 but contains some additional views and references. I have also discontinued two of my objections as I believe that others are likely to pursue them better than I ever could. Please therefore disregard the previous versions.

Objection to the stopping up of Prince's Parade.

I believe that the proposed stopping up of the highway in Prince's Parade, Hythe has a number of adverse implications for the local and wider communities as well as the natural environment and should not be permitted. My reasons are as follows:

1. Prince's Parade is one of the main features which define Hythe for its residents and it reinforces a separate identity from Folkestone for both Hythe and Sandgate. Without this road the identification of Hythe as a distinct town will be considerably diminished and both Hythe and Sandgate will become little more than suburbs of Folkestone.
2. Prince's Parade provides a visually attractive and faster route between Hythe and Folkestone for local traffic (in either direction). It is especially useful for residents when the A259 is blocked or congested, as it frequently is. The proposed new road routes would be longer and would have to be speed restricted where it passes through the new housing estate and commercial development.
3. When approaching Hythe from the east along Prince's Parade the wide sweeping views across Hythe Bay form an attractive and important first impression of Hythe for visitors and tourists. Without it the attraction of Hythe to visitors, upon whom many traders in the town depend, will be seriously diminished. The visual impact of driving through a housing estate can never hope to match the impact of approaching along Prince's Parade.

The above concerns are largely glossed over or understated in the Council rebuttal of the objections. They repeatedly refer to the objectors as being 'several' rather than the hundred and odd who have raised objections on most of these points. The Councils often stated assertion that the main purpose of a public highway is just to 'pass and repass' (Buckles 7.20 (iv) does not demonstrate an understanding of the issues regarding roads. Their view is an outdated concept and fails to take account of the many ways that roads can, and should, benefit communities. A wider and more balanced view of the purpose and value of public highways can be found in the DfT's Manual for Streets (HMSO, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-7277-3501-0).

4. I also have serious concerns about the environmental impact upon the Royal Military Canal (RMC) and the surrounding area of the realigned road. In particular the wisdom of bringing traffic, with its attendant exhaust fumes, noise and light at night, closer to the RMC rather than being dissipated across a hundred yards or more of vegetation. The claim that the realigned road will somehow balance the requirements of visitors to the canal and the environment (Buckles 7.20 (iii)) is not borne out by the facts and the claim that it will somehow enhance the RMC for visitors (Buckles 7.20 (ii)) is, like many of the assertion contained in the Response to Objections, highly subjective. I presume that these points will be expanded upon at some length by other objectors.

It is not enough for the Council to say that these matters were considered by the Council in its role as the Planning Authority because if Prince's Parade were to be stopped up the new road would be the responsibility of the local Highway Authority (KCC) who have duties and responsibilities outside of the planning process regarding both the environmental and social impacts of the roads they manage.

5. The on street parking situation is a very sore point with many Hythe Residents. After the scale of the opposition to the Prince's Parade development became known Shepway District Council (as it then was) decided to spend a considerable amount of money on ticket machines, signage and cutting access holes through the sea wall so that they could start charging for on street parking. The Council's stated reason for charging for on street parking was to mitigate the adverse effect of the overspill from Prince's Parade into the surrounding area during busy periods. They now claim that the on street parking is underused.

There is an ongoing boycott of the on street parking by disgruntled local residents. Any figures used by the Council to justify the provision of a car parking is probably not a true reflection of the actual demand for parking.

Of course the Council's preference for car parks rather than on street parking may also be because money generated by on street parking have to be accounted for and any excess above costs has to be returned to KCC. Fees from on street parking belong entirely to the Council.

In the Buckles response the Section called 'Response Theme J – Joint local inquiry' on page 18 refers to the decision by the SoS (MHCLG) not to call in the Planning Application. This decision, and indeed the whole Section, refers only to the process followed during the Planning Application and is irrelevant to the discussion of the stopping up order.

Yours Sincerely

Fred Cooper