

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

30 May 2018

Ref: NATTRAN/SE/S247/3254

I strongly object to the plans to 'stop up' the beachfront road at Princes Parade and divert it to run alongside the Royal Military Canal for the following reasons:

The stopping up and diversion of the road is NOT essential to the proposed development of Princes Parade: The development is NOT dependent on the stopping up and diversion of the road. If the development goes ahead, the general public should not be penalised by the stopping up and diversion of the existing road. It is not right that only the fortunate residents of the luxury apartments, the boutique hotel and leisure centre members should have the privilege of direct, motorised access to the beachfront while everyone else will be denied.

The stopping up of the road will cause additional pollution and traffic chaos in the Seabrook/Hythe area and significantly affect the health and well-being of residents: Traffic congestion is already a major issue in Hythe. Developments at Shorncliffe, along Seabrook Road (the busy, narrow A259) and adjoining roads will exacerbate existing problems. The additional traffic chaos, noise and pollution of all kinds that the closure of the beachfront road would bring to this area would have significant environmental consequences and a grossly negative impact on the health and general well-being of residents, most notably in Seabrook.

The stopping up of the road is dangerous: If the seafront road is stopped up, the narrow, congested A259 will become the only direct link between Hythe and Sandgate/Folkestone. This would have grave consequences for emergency vehicles and could even threaten the lives of those requiring their services. When the A259 is closed for roadworks or for any reason (as it has been recently) the seafront road provides an alternative route.

The stopping up and diversion of the road will cause significant harm to a scheduled ancient monument, the Royal Military Canal: The Royal Military Canal (RMC) is the *only* military canal in the country and, as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is of national as well as local importance. The 'historic openness' of PP is intrinsic to the Canal's significance. Should the plan to divert the beachfront road to run alongside the RMC ever be implemented, the Canal's 'setting' – fundamental to its status as a Scheduled Ancient Monument - would suffer 'substantial harm'.

The stopping up and diversion of the road will deny many people access to an area currently designated as public open space that many consider the most attractive and popular destination in the District: The existing road at Princes Parade allows easy access to both the canal and beach for all those who are unable, for one reason or another, to make their way there 'under their own steam'. In conjunction with the seafront promenade/cycle path, the RMC's peaceful, sheltered, waterside paths have always been **open to all** to enjoy throughout the year whatever their age, their circumstances or physical capabilities. A wide variety of low-key leisure activities are currently enjoyed here. These include running, walking, cycling, fishing, canoeing, picnicking etc to simply 'getting away from it all' to relax in the natural surroundings. It also offers the increasingly rare opportunity to experience a

'taste of the countryside' by the sea. In recognition of its value to local people as a recreational resource, the RMC has Green Flag status. Easy motorised access to the site is vital to its continuing contribution to the health and general well-being, both physical and mental, of local people as well as many visitors.

The stopping up and diversion of the road will cause further loss of informal open space in the District which is already recognised as deficient in 'accessible open space':

Paragraph 4.66 of January 2018's Sustainability Appraisal notes that a significant proportion of residents are 'deficient in access to open space' in the District and that there is a lack of opportunity for 'informal recreation'. As long ago as 2004 the Government Planning Inspector's described Seabrook as already as 'deficient in every sort of public space'. The stopping up of the road will further deny many people the possibility of access to the natural, informal open space at PP and the RMC.

The stopping up and diversion of the road will cause significant harm to the biodiversity of this area and the destruction of an important wildlife habitat:

The RMC is demonstrably special, not only because of its historical significance but, also, because it is tranquil and a haven for wildlife. This area is currently designated as 'Public Open Green Space'. The 'remediation strategy' associated with the stopping up and diversion of the road 'will require all vegetation to be removed' from the entire area of 'informal open space'. This, and the noise and light associated with the new road will have a devastating and wholly negative impact.

The stopping up and diversion of the road will cause damage to the local economy:

Princes Parade and the Royal Military Canal attract very many visitors from outside the area many of whom will be denied access if the road is stopped up. They will go elsewhere if this iconic seafront road, a 'significant local landscape' with magnificent views both inland and out to sea is no longer accessible to them.

Dr Jean Baker,

