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To: NATIONALCASEWORK <NATIONALCASEWORK@dft.gov.uk>
Subject: reference NATTRAN/SE/S247/3254

Stopping Up the Road - Princes Parade, Hythe, Kent

I am writing to explain to you as explicitly as I can the enormous impact of this order for some very important reasons:

- Traffic concerns
- Environmental and historic concerns
- Lack of evidence to support this proposal
- The loss of a valued community asset
- The impact on me personally

Traffic concerns

The main road between Hythe and Folkestone is a busy and frequently congested route. There is a huge volume of traffic using this road, especially at peak times. Heavy lorries use this main road, and it is an important bus route, with many buses that run every few minutes. The frequent bus stops mean that the traffic can often be held up, especially in areas of the road where the carriageway is narrowed by residents' parking outside their houses. At times of Operation Stack or M20 closure due to major accidents, this road also becomes the main diversion route to take drivers off the motorway to reach their destinations.

However, this volume of traffic and resultant congestion is considerably alleviated by the good seafront road of Princes Parade. Local people use this road daily to travel to work, to shop and to take their children to school. It provides a valuable non-congested alternative route which flows freely and reliably and is a vital community asset that the people of Hythe have used for generations.

The planners may tell you that Princes Parade is a cut-through. This only displays their total lack of local knowledge – no-one would cut off the main road and negotiate the heavily parked local roads of Stade Street and Twiss Road in order to avoid using the main trunk road. It is used by local south Hythe residents going about their daily lives, and by visitors who want to enjoy the sea view this road affords. If Princes Parade is stopped up and diverted inland, it will become a cumbersome, bendy (and possibly speed-humped), non-viable road that will not be a good direct link for the purposes of daily life of residents.

The impact on the main trunk road of all this extra local traffic cannot be underestimated, and huge congestion of the main road from Hythe to Folkestone will be a daily inconvenience locals will have to face to go about their normal lives.

Environmental and historic concerns.

In Hythe we are very proud and protective of our historic past. The Royal Military Canal is one of Britain's finest examples of defence of the realm, and is universally recognised as such. In the solitude and serenity of this canal, particularly in its wildest areas near Princes Parade, the historical significance can be enjoyed, imagined, and appreciated.

The unique remoteness and amazing wildlife that results from its position are to be treasured, as Historic England are only too keen to point out. Repositioning Princes Road nearer to this wonderful canal will significantly impact on its character and setting, and detract from its cultural importance, which the nation has a responsibility to protect.

I am appalled that a housing development can take precedence over the preservation of the nation's heritage. As a nation we put great importance on preserving our symbolic landmarks, but at one stroke the environs of this treasure will be destroyed for ever.

Lack of Evidence of this proposed "stopping up's" necessity.

The developers for this housing project have not demonstrated why the diversion of Princes Parade is intrinsic and essential to their plans. The new leisure centre will not be accessed by people on foot, because it is too far away from houses for people to walk there. The vast majority of users of the leisure centre will be people in cars, and they will park in the car park, not cross over Princes Parade.

Currently the promenade is wide and spacious, and even on busy summer weekends is easily shared by people walking, cycling, and in wheelchairs, as well as children on scooters and roller-skates. There is never a problem of space, and the promenade is perfectly adequate already, being safe and wonderfully scenic.

The assertion that it needs to be traffic-free in that area is a false and misleading one, and can only serve to confuse authorities considering the proposals. The more relevant reason for the housing developers is that expensive apartment's sell for more money if the new residents have an uninterrupted sea view unspoilt by traffic, and everyone knows that.

The loss of a community asset

In other sections I have already mentioned that stopping up this road will severely limit local residents' rights to a community asset enjoyed for many years. This concern also deserves its own section, as the loss of this viable road will be felt by many people. Some will miss the accessibility it gives them to the eastern end of Princes Parade.

