

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

1. Princes Parade is one of the main features which define Hythe for its residents. Without this road the identification of Hythe as a distinct town will be diminished.
2. Princes Parade provides a visually attractive and faster route between Hythe and Folkestone for local traffic. It is especially useful when the A259 is blocked or congested. 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 Princes 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 who many traders in the town depend, will be seriously diminished.
4. When the sea defences in Princes Parade are overtopped by high tides or storm surges the proposed new road will allow sea water to flow to very near the Royal Military Canal. This will present a serious additional risk to the flora and fauna in the canal and its surrounds.
5. The proposed new road will run over land which was contaminated by its use as an unregulated refuse tip, a highway depot and a place to dump canal dredgings, as well as from fly tipping. A limited site investigation in relation to a previous planning application revealed extensive contamination of the site by many toxic substances including heavy metals, as well as elevated levels of many other chemicals.

Road drainage is likely to be a particular issue as the road will need to be constructed in such a way as to insulate it from the contaminated ground. However if this is done then the road formation layers will act as a sump for surface runoff and any stray subsurface water, both of which may be contaminated. Disposal of this water may not be possible through the public sewers and the road structure itself could easily become contaminated.

6. There is the possibility of invasive species of flora along the route of the new road. Folkestone and Hythe District Council have previously acknowledged the presence of Japanese Knotweed but didn't keep records of its exact location and the measures that were taken to deal with it. The presence of invasive species like Japanese Knotweed could seriously compromise the structure of the new road and further increase the likelihood of contamination of the road structure.

Items 5 and 6 would both represent a considerable liability for the eventual owner (presumably Kent County Council as the local Highway Authority) of the road. Future maintenance will require additional measures (and expense) to preserve the integrity of the special construction of the road. If contaminants were to leach into the road construction layers or be washed in from other parts of the site then the maintenance would become even more complicated and the costs to KCC would be many times greater than that of the existing road in Princes Parade.