

From the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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27th February 2023

Dear Mr Birkinshaw

I have recently met with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, National Highways and Kent County Council about a submission made by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council on 12 July 2022 to the Examination in Public of the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan.

This submission contains a proposal to narrow the B2160 at its junction with the A21 at Kippings Cross to one lane, from two. It was put forward – very late in the day, at nearly the end of the Examination in Public - in order mitigate the impact on the A21 of traffic arising from proposed new housing development contained in the plan.

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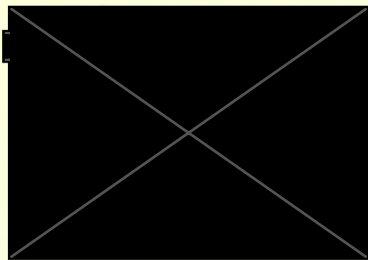
If this were to be implemented it would have the deliberate effect of increasing delays on the B2160 at that junction by on average 39 minutes at the morning peak and 17 minutes at the evening peak. What the proposal does not say – but which is obvious – is that if implemented the plan would substantially increase rat-running through the very narrow and winding roads parallel to the A21 in the parishes of Capel, Pembury, Matfield, Brenchley and Horsmonden. These roads, several of which are residential, are already under severe pressure to the extent that I am working with National Highways and the parishes on ways to stop traffic using these side roads and instead stay on the main A21.

Such a major and damaging proposal has been submitted without any consultation with any of the parish councils affected nor residents nor myself as the Member of Parliament.

I have asked National Highways to undertake no further work to implement this proposal which - in my view – is unsound and has evaded democratic scrutiny and I have also raised my concerns with the Secretary of State, Michael Gove.

I would be grateful if you would not rely on this late submission made in the name of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in your further considerations of the plan.

Yours sincerely



Rt Hon Greg Clark MP  
Member of Parliament for Tunbridge Wells