



To: Programme Officer (Charlotte Glancy)  
Tunbridge Wells Local Plan Examination

via email: [bankssolutionsuk@gmail.com](mailto:bankssolutionsuk@gmail.com)

Mrs Michelle Berrington  
Head of Planning & Development  
(South East)  
Bridge House  
Walnut Tree Close  
Guildford  
GU1 4LZ

14 June 2022

Dear Ms Glancy

## **NATIONAL HIGHWAYS STATEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH**

### **Examination of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan**

### **Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions for Stage 2 – Revised**

### **Matter 12: Transport Infrastructure (Policies STR6, TP1, TP2, TP3, TP4, TP5 and TP6)**

### **Issue 4: Safeguarded Infrastructure**

### **Question 3: What is the justification for safeguarding the remaining section of the A21 from the Kipping's Cross roundabout to the Lamberhurst roundabout? How and when is this expected to be delivered?**

**Hearing Day 19: Tuesday 12 July 2022 Virtual – 'Zoom'**

**Afternoon Session: 14.00 – 17:30**

**Matter 12 Issue 4: Safeguarded Infrastructure**

### **Introduction**

The Inspector's question M12 I4 Q3 (as set out above) has recently come to the attention of National Highways.

Given the matter has relevance to National Highways and is of great interest to many local and wider stakeholders, we feel it would be helpful for us to submit this statement to the Examination.

We note that statements for July Hearing Days were due to be submitted no later than 10 June. We apologise for the slight delay in submitting this statement resulting from annual leave of key staff.

Our general representations on the emerging and submitted Local Plan already form part of the evidence base, as does the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG), signed by National Highways and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) in October 2021. We continue to work closely, proactively and positively with TWBC, Kent County Highways and other parties regarding matters arising from the Local Plan and other proposals.

This statement does not alter our previous representations, the basic thrust of the SoCG or our current work. We are content for this statement to be taken as read, but if the Inspector or other parties have any questions or wish us to attend the 12 July Hearing Session covering Q3, in person or virtually, please contact us via [planningse@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:planningse@nationalhighways.co.uk).

## **Statement**

National Highways is a government owned company which operates, maintains and improves the Strategic Road Network (SRN) as a strategic highway company appointed under the provisions of the [Infrastructure Act 2015](#) in accordance with a [Licence](#) issued by the Secretary of State for Transport.

The SRN in the vicinity of Tunbridge Wells comprises the A21 Trunk Road.

We are a statutory consultee to the planning process. We have a specific remit to deliver economic growth through the provision of a safe and reliable SRN, in line with the provisions set out in [DfT Circular 02/2013: The strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development](#) ("The Circular"). The Circular sets out how we will work with local planning authorities and developers to ensure that specific tests are met when promoting a plan or scheme. This includes ensuring that the transport impact is understood, any mitigation (or other SRN infrastructure) is designed in accordance with the relevant standards and that environmental impacts are appraised and mitigated accordingly.

With regards M12 I4 Q3, we note the following:

- 1) Historically, governments have acknowledged the importance of improving the A21, most recently via the decision to dual the Tonbridge to Pembury section (now completed).
- 2) Governments, via National Highways predecessors, have also proposed schemes on the Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst section of the A21. The most recent scheme was proposed in the early 2000's. Appendix 1 contains a letter sent to TWBC in April 2011. It will be noted that it simply states that the project was unlikely to be funded, and hence the project had been cancelled. It did not state or infer that improvements were no longer required.
- 3) The current Government, makes decisions on a five-yearly cycle as to where and when road studies and/or projects will take place via its Roads Investment Programme and Roads Investment Strategy (RIS). The current cycle, RIS2, runs from 2020 to 2025; RIS3 is due to run from 2025 to 2030 and so on; with each cycle the subject of comprehensive public engagement and assessment of national to local circumstances and priorities.
- 4) RIS2 includes the A21 Safety Scheme (details of which can be found at <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-work/south-east/a21-safety-package/> ). Minor works will be carried out on the section between Kippings Cross and Lamberhurst in the period up to 2025. We anticipate that they can be carried out within the current highway boundary; although detailed designs have yet to be finalised. Therefore, while not a current National Highways requirement, should the safeguarding of the land be removed from the Plan, it could fetter safety led opportunities not otherwise normally available.
- 5) Going forwards, we note that the submitted TWBC LP will cover the period up to 2038; but, in accordance with national planning policy and best practice, will be reviewed several times during this period.
- 6) Similarly, during this period, there will be several RIS cycles, each providing an opportunity for the future needs of the A21 to be considered.
- 7) In this context, we remain aware of, and committed to seeking to meet, long term and continuing needs/ aspirations for A21 improvements, including between Kippings Cross and Lamberhurst.
- 8) To this end, we can confirm that the impending Route Strategy for the South Coast Central area (covering the A21 and a key document supporting government RIS decision making) will refer to this on-going need and aspiration.
- 9) It will then be a matter for Government to balance all competing needs and aspirations across all the England Route Strategies to publish lists of schemes for studies and/or or delivery as part of RIS3 or beyond. Government decisions are expected during 2023-2025, for RIS3 covering the 2025-2030 period.

Given the above considerations, while we have not required TWBC to safeguard land, it remains the case that future government roads investment plans could include projects requiring land to be safeguarded between Kippings Cross and Lamberhurst either within or beyond the plan period. To delete the safeguarding notation from the plan at this stage could fetter the ability of the government to bring forward proposals and this could limit growth options beyond the plan period. Consequently, it would be helpful if the TWBC LP safeguarding land in the vicinity of this section of the A21 were to be retained.

We trust that our statement assists. As mentioned above, if the Inspector or other parties have any queries or require us to attend the Hearing Session on 12 July please contact us via [planningse@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:planningse@nationalhighways.co.uk) .

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MB', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border. To the left of the signature is a small black square icon with a white 'X' inside.

Mrs Michelle Berrington  
Head of Planning & Development  
South East Operations Division  
Email: 

cc: Nichola Watters TWBC  
Peter Phillips, Patrick Blake, Kevin Bown

## Appendix 1


Safe roads, Reliable journeys, Informed travellers



Our ref: HA 4/24/36  
Your ref:

Graham Link  
2A  
Federated House  
London Road  
Dorking RH4 1SZ

The Director of Planning  
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Civic Way  
Royal Tunbridge Wells  
Kent  
TN1 1RS

Direct Line: 

6 April 2011

Dear Sir or Madam

### **A21 KIPPINGS CROSS TO LAMBERHURST IMPROVEMENT WITHDRAWAL OF PREFERRED ROUTE**

I refer to our letter of 18<sup>th</sup> May 2004 which, following the announcement of a Preferred Route for the above scheme, enclosed form TR111 serving formal Notice on the Council of the Secretary of State's proposal under Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1995.

In the October 2010 Spending Review, it was announced that it was not considered realistically likely that the A21 Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst scheme would receive funding in the current Spending Review period, or the next one, and therefore it had been cancelled.

I am therefore writing to advise the Notification described above is formally withdrawn.

There will consequently be no need for any planning applications to be referred to us in accordance with the Article or for details of the proposal to be revealed to prospective purchasers of properties within 200 metres of the route

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this notification by signing and returning the attached acknowledgement in the envelope provided.

Yours faithfully



Graham Link  
MP South Project Manager - Dorking  
Email: [graham.link@highways.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:graham.link@highways.gsi.gov.uk)

A21 KX-L Ltr HA to TWBC.TR111 Withdrawal Letter.06.04.2011.doc



Department for  
**Transport**