

A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Team  
 Highways Agency  
 Federated House  
 London Road  
 Dorking  
 Surrey RH4 1SH

<b>Contact</b>	<b>Steve Humphrey</b>
<b>Direct line</b>	<b>01732 876256</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b>Steve.Humphrey@tmbc.gov.uk</b>
<b>Fax</b>	01732 876317
<b>Your ref</b>	
<b>Our ref</b>	PTLS/MMC/A21
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Dear Sirs

## **A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling Scheme**

You recently published information on alternative proposals for the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling Scheme and these will be considered at the Public Inquiry arranged for 13 July.

Unfortunately, the closing date for responses prevents me submitting comments endorsed by the Tonbridge & Malling Joint Transportation Board (JTB). However it is important that the views of the Board are reflected in your consideration of these alternative proposals because they do have potential to significantly adversely affect progress on the dualling of the A21. The JTB brings together the views of both the Borough and County Councils, both of which wish to see the work on the A21 dualling scheme going ahead as soon as possible. I hope therefore that you can accept some interim comments now within your period for response. They have been drafted in conjunction with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the JTB and I will follow this up shortly once I have had an opportunity to obtain a JTB endorsement when it meets on 14 June.

Given both Councils' support for the currently approved scheme, it is a reasonable extension to indicate that the JTB would not wish any weight to be given to alternative proposals that might set things back unless the proposals were so overwhelmingly superior to the approved scheme that they really did warrant consideration. None of the alternative proposals can be described in this way. The first two are positively harmful and the third is irrelevant.

Alternative 1 is a proposal for a new route some 500m to the west of the existing proposal. It offers no improvement whatsoever over the approved scheme and is much inferior in terms of cost and environmental impact. The fact that it would push the process back some two or three years makes it extremely unattractive and it is difficult to understand why this is being proposed at all.

Alternative 2 proposes another way of dealing with two accesses at the northern end of the scheme. It adds no discernible access improvement yet it would add to the cost of the project and would create a more harmful environmental impact at a sensitive part of the site.

Alternative 3 is a suggestion for a new road between the Vauxhall Roundabout and the edge of the North Farm industrial area. I am quizzical why you categorize this as an 'alternative' proposal because it is not. It is a proposal for an entirely different road and not really relevant to consideration of the A21 except insofar as there might be some funding linkage that resulted in the financial considerations of the dualling project being prejudiced.

It has long been recognised that this stretch of proposed dualling by the Highways Agency is of critical importance to the primary highway network. Current levels of congestion are simply unacceptable on such a primary route and a location that serves a new major regional hospital and principal access to the defined regional hub of Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells. An important consideration is the safety record of this short stretch of single carriageway road that is extremely concerning and makes urgent construction of the scheme essential. The scheme is four-square with many elements of public policy and it cannot be delayed any further.

In summary, therefore, I would request that you record concerns by the JTB about each of the alternative proposals. If, as is likely when you fully and duly consider the alternative proposals at the Inquiry, more detailed information on them emerges, I would be grateful if I could reserve the Borough Council's position to make such further and fuller submissions as may be necessary and appropriate at that time.

Yours sincerely

**Steve Humphrey**  
Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure