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Date	18 January 2011

Dear Mr Williams

A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling Scheme

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Tonbridge & Malling Joint Transportation Committee wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport on 8 July to express the deep concerns of the Board at the postponement of the Public Inquiry for the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling scheme.

I will not repeat the series of significant strategic reasons which make early completion of this project a necessity, not the least of which is safe and efficient access to the new hospital at Pembury. However, all of these reasons remain valid.

You kindly responded to the Council on 12 July outlining the budget pressures arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) that was taking place at the time and explaining the necessity for the moratorium on all preparation works for schemes not yet in the firm programme.

We now know the results of the CSR and the A21 Scheme has slipped back in the programme to the period beyond 2015. This slippage in the programme concerns my Members considerably because it means the critical road safety improvements, access to regeneration areas and alleviation of a major point of congestion on the strategic road network will now be delayed for several years.

This is, of course, disappointing to my Members but it is not the main reason that I am writing to you. The Council is represented on the A21 Reference Group, made up of local authorities and Members of Parliament along the route of the A21.

The Group is extremely keen to ensure that all procedural and administrative impediments to progress on the A21 scheme are removed so that the earliest possible start can be made on the construction just as soon as the budget is confirmed. One of the critical administrative processes to be completed is the Public Inquiry and I would like to confirm that this Council shares the view of the Reference Group that this should take place as soon as possible.



Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure Services: Steve Humphrey (MRTPI)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

If you are able to offer any information or advice on the arrangements for the Public Inquiry taking place in the short rather than the longer term, I would be most grateful.

Yours sincerely

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure