

HUW MERRIMAN MP
(Bexhill and Battle)



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

3 October 2019

Dear Constituent,

A21 Update

Whilst I am in Hurst Green village today, I thought it would be helpful to provide local residents with an update on the work I have been doing to campaign for improvements to the A21.

Many of you may recall the protest we organised outside Hurst Green school last December following the accident involving a local family. After this, I wrote to the Chief Executive of Highways England with a number of specific questions about the road and its safety record. The reply I received in January was far from satisfactory. I therefore arranged a meeting with the Chief Executive to challenge him personally on these issues.

At this point, I decided that further lobbying with the Roads Minister would be essential to ensure that Highways England was fully aware of how serious this matter is to my constituents and I enlisted the support of my neighbouring MPs, Amber Rudd and Greg Clark, in order to press the case for improvements to the A21. In early July this year, we held a meeting with the then Roads Minister, Michael Ellis, the Chief Executive of Highways England and two of his senior managers. Following this meeting, we were clear about two things:

1. Highways England already have in place some proposals for improving the A21. Some of these have secured funding and are already in progress, some are in the planning stage and will be completed from designated funds and other plans for a whole route improvement are dependent on further government investment.
2. The proposals for further government investment depend on the strength of support from local stakeholders, the local transport body -Transport for the South East and a strong business case to demonstrate value for money.

Following the meeting, Amber Rudd, Greg Clark and I immediately wrote to the Chair of Transport for the South East (TfSE) to ensure they were fully behind further investment in the A21. His response confirmed that this is the case and their proposals to the Department for the next Road Investment Strategy (RIS) period also asked the

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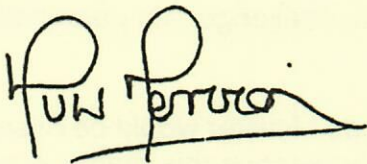
government to prioritise further dualling of the A21 to make the road safer and more resilient. This is an ambition we share and continue to campaign for.

At my request, Highways England provided me with the attached document which outlines their current plans for the A21 and which also answers some of the specific questions that I raised with them previously on behalf of the communities which are affected by it. I hope it may be of interest.

As well as continuing to campaign to make the A21 a safer road for my constituents, I will continue to look for any other potential opportunities and sources of funding for a by-pass around Hurst Green village, such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund. I will continue to work closely with your parish council and district and county councillors in order to take any such proposals forward.

I did contact Highways England, East Sussex County Council, Rother District Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership to assess if the Housing Infrastructure Fund could be utilised to deliver a bypass in return for more housing. If the village is getting more housing, then it struck me as sensible to find out how many more houses would be required to secure funding for the by-pass the village so badly needs. The stakeholders did not take me up on the offer and, having no responsibility or powers myself for delivering housing or transport, I can only make suggestions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw Merriman'. The signature is stylized with a large 'H' and 'M'.

Huw Merriman MP
Member of Parliament for Bexhill and Battle