

From: Stephen Sumption
Sent: 27 May 2018 19:23
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Subject: The Transport and Works Act 1992 RVR (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order.

Dear Sir,

The Transport and Works Act 1992 RVR (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order.

My Name is Anthony Conn and I live a law's email as, at almost I do not use email and so do not have my own email address, however in view of the short time before the consultation period closes I have decided that email is the most appropriate form of communication.

I am sending this objection using my son-in-

I am raising this objection having considered the information that has been provided to me by both the supporters and the opponents of the proposed railway extension by the Rother Valley Railway (RVR). While I do not object to the principal of a rail link between Bodiam and Robertsbridge I am very concerned about the way it is being implemented and I question some of the assertions made in support of the Order. My concerns can be divided into Personal Reasons, those that directly affect me, and General Reasons, those that may not directly affect me but cause me concern.

Personal Reasons

Traffic Congestion

I cannot drive at the moment

should anything happen that necessitates medical intervention I will be entirely dependent on the Emergency Services. It appears that there will be 3 level crossings, two of them new, over the main traffic arteries in the Robertsbridge area all within 1 ¼ miles of each other taking furthest point to furthest point, not counting an additional crossing proposed for Salehurst. This must have an impact on the traffic flow of the area and is likely to make it more difficult for the emergency services to attend at my house or, should it be necessary, to transport me to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department, The Conquest Hospital. This issue does not appear to have been addressed in the information provided by RVR where they only make reference to a single level crossing over the A21.

Impact on Parking

The RVR in their documentation rather glibly dismiss concerns about local parking, which is already difficult, stating that:

- "The main users of Robertsbridge Junction are expected to arrive by train." They provide no reference to any basis for this statement and in fact it seems to fly in the face of logic. If a family of four decide to travel on the RVR, are they more likely to buy four train tickets to get to Robertsbridge at £10 to £20 per head i.e. £40 to £80, or put £20 to £30 pounds of fuel in the tank of their car. It seems to me that there will, in all probability, be a significant increase in the amount of traffic requiring parking in Robertsbridge and that this also is likely also impact on the Emergency Services' ability to respond to, and access, my address.
- "The Bluebell Line provided no additional parking when it connected to the main line and there have been no parking problems." This may be so, but we are not talking about the Bluebell Line and there has been no information provided to show that the two cases are analogous. What is clear, however, is that there is no plan to deal with any parking issues. Parking issues are simply dismissed as of no concern.

General Reasons

Traffic Congestion/Planning

In 1989 the Robertsbridge Bypass was opened in order to improve the flow of traffic past the village and reduce congestion on the A21. It seems that the additional level crossings will defeat the purpose of the Bypass which was built at considerable public expense,

The use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) for this purpose

It seems to me that CPOs are intended to facilitate key Government infrastructure projects, whether Local or National. They were never intended, or never should have been intended to enable enthusiasts, Railway or otherwise to forcibly deprive farmers or anyone else of the ownership of their land, impacting on their livelihood, in order to allow those enthusiasts to pursue their leisure interests. This is what appears to be being proposed in this case and I find it difficult to see how the use of such a draconian and coercive Government power can be justified for such a purpose.

Who will benefit

In their documentation the RVR make much of the economic benefits that will accrue to the area, but it appears that they will primarily accrue to areas other than Robertsbridge where by their own admission passengers will simply transfer from the mainline to the RVR. There does not appear to have been any real Cost/Benefit analysis of the impact on Robertsbridge; There has been an analysis where the impact on Robertsbridge seems to be lost in a study of a more general nature taking into account Bodiam and Tenterden.

The behaviour of the RVR

RVR make much of the experience of the Bluebell Line, which appears to be a Charity. The way that RVR are conducting themselves does not seem to conform to the way that a charity should behave but then they are not a charity they are a limited company. As a limited company RVR have a duty to behave in a commercial manner, and this would explain the decision to use CPOs. From the Youtube video they refer to in their documentation, it would seem that the motivation is to maximise the profits of the RVR for the benefit of the RVR and its shareholders. What, however, happens if their projections prove to be inaccurate? What happens if there is an accident on the RVR? Will HMRI require changes that make RVR no longer viable as a going concern or close them down entirely? If the company is unable to continue trading solvently will it go into liquidation? In such a circumstance what happens to the land obtained under CPOs? Land that will have been purchased for a particular purpose and then sold to another entity by the insolvency practitioners probably for a different purpose.

Overall, if the RVR would behave in a less bullying way, avoid the use of CPOs and address the issues of Parking, Traffic Congestion and the economic interests of Robertsbridge as well as those of Tenterden and Bodiam then I might remove my objections but as things stand I cannot support doing this thing in this way.

Yours Faithfully,

A.T.W. Conn

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