

OBJ 198

The Secretary of State for Transport  
c/o Transport and Works Act Orders Unit,  
General Counsel's Office,  
Dept. for Transport, Zone 1/18,  
Great Minster House,  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR  
14th May 2018



Marcus Rex

With reference to planning application: RR/2014/1608/P

Dear Sir

I wish to lodge my objections to the proposed compulsory purchase of land by Rother Valley Railway (RVR) in Robertsbridge East Sussex. The proposals have very large implications for road safety, undisturbed natural habitat and the Robertsbridge flood defences. RVR have produced their own studies that seem to go against common sense and I feel there is a very strong justification to have the application dismissed or the studies put forward by RVR tested by a public enquiry.

I object to placing a level crossing on the A21 as it is a strategic road designed reduce congestion and by-pass the village of Robertsbridge. Doing so would go against the A21 Reference Group, formed by Council Leaders, including Rother Council to reduce traffic congestion on this road. Additionally the Road Safety Foundation has cited that the section of the A21 between Hurst Green and Hastings as the most dangerous road on England's strategic Road network. The placement of a level crossing here is adding risk hazards to an already dangerous, strategic road. Other rail companies are removing level crossings due to the danger they pose, in the light of this, the report produced by RVR appears very flawed as their findings seem to say there will be very little danger and no additional congestion. I feel that level crossings crossings must not be deployed on any road unless there is a compelling need and no other alternative. In this case there is no compelling need.

My second concern is in relation to flooding in the village of Robertsbridge where I run a business and am resident. I have grave concerns that the the study funded by RVR was not as exhaustive nor enquiring enough, focusing only on findings to support the applicant's case while failing to consider the full effects of constructing such large earthworks across several kilometres of extremely flood sensitive land. The effected section of the A21 was built to by-pass the village and was not in existence when the old railway ran across this route. In order for the proposed new rail tracks to transit the by-pass, large embankments must be constructed across the flood plain. There has been no proper consideration on the effects of flooding on the village nor the infrastructure that is within the affected area, namely the water pumping station and electricity substations. I have witnessed first hand the speed at which flood water rises around the village and the regular work needed clearing the many drainage ditches in the area. The Environment Agency have stationed mobile pumps in the area which are run when the water level surges. The area has a large sums spent on it to defend the village from flood water, placing such a large construction through the middle these defences can only have a negative impact on them.

I also find it deeply troubling that such a non essential and un-environmentally sound project is being advanced by the use of a compulsory purchase order. The area has been designated an AOBN yet RVR plan to tear up and build over undisturbed natural habitats at Moat Farm. Compulsory purchase orders and acts of Parliament should surely be reserved for the advancement of genuine infrastructure and not be used to snatch land from its owners at the whim of a private company. I feel that the application should be refused or a full Public enquiry set up fully investigate the risks to public safety and damage to the environment this application will cause if allowed to go ahead.

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