

From: Christopher Rowsell
Sent: 17 May 2018 10:39
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Subject: Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order

I am writing to object to the proposed extension of the railway line as set out above.

This project is not in the local interest of the people or businesses of Robertsbridge and the Rother Valley Railway (RVR) have already admitted this.

The construction of this project, if it were to go ahead will cause many negative impacts for the area:

1. Reinstatement of three manually operated railway crossings, one of which will be on the A21, the main arterial road from Hastings to London. This is contrary to the Government and Network Rail's policy to remove level crossings (Even automated ones) on the grounds that they are deemed dangerous. Also, the additional travel time for motorists, combined with the frustration caused to them cannot be underestimated. If the scheme is approved, it should at least require the roads to be lifted to provide tunnel access for the trains and hence create a safe environment for the public.
2. RVR have no plans to provide parking of any quantity at Robertsbridge, claiming that enthusiasts will arrive by the National Rail Network in order to ride on the diesel or steam train that will take them to Tenterden. I have no idea what studies have been undertaken to come to that conclusion, but I know that currently the small Network Rail car park is all but full most days and all the surrounding streets are full of rail commuters parked cars. The anticipated number of visitors will almost certainly be split between railway users and road users and I would think that common sense would dictate that most of these will be using cars. The potentially dangerous impact of this additional parking in Robertsbridge cannot be underestimated.
3. Risk of flooding. Anyone who lived in the area during the floods of winter 2000 will know how environmentally fragile this area is. Excellent work by the Environmental Agency has kept the floods at check in the subsequent years. The construction of the project can only increase that risk returning. This could have impact on many of the houses at the north end of the village.
4. Use of Compulsory Purchase to acquire land for this non-essential project. (It is after all a hobby railway ride.) The land which will would come under such compulsory purchase currently is in small fields which run through a farmed but an environmentally important wetland habitat. The proposed route will sub-divide those fields into units too small to economically farm together with the loss or extreme reduction of access for the farmers. These habitats have been untouched for a very long time. This project cannot be a justifiable reason for such an act?
5. The project is claimed to be a reinstatement of the railway. This cannot be the case as the track bed does not exist anymore and the planned route differs from the original. In any case the original was designed to benefit the local population and to provide profits for the rail owner. That is not the case for this project.
6. With so many negative aspects to this project, I think the residents of Robertsbridge should at least be given the right to a Public Enquiry.

Chris Rowsell,