

**From:** Hugh Hedges  
**Sent:** 27 May 2018 12:14  
**To:** TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT  
**Subject:** Rother Valley Railway: application made under the Transport and Works Act 1992

Dear Sir

I am emailing to provide comments on the above application. I would be grateful if you could please acknowledge receipt of this email.

The application includes the compulsory purchase of land. As a result the Human Rights Act 1998 is engaged. Under Article 1 Protocol 1 no one can be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. I will therefore focus on the public interest arising from the application.

The local socio-economic impacts of the scheme are described as minimal, though very marginally positive, arising from inward tourism (para 6.9.1, third RVR document). The sixth document at para 14.2.11 suggests 64 full time equivalent jobs, while para 14.4.10 suggests 14. The reports by MMU are not included in the documents supplied but I do want to focus on the perceived disbenefits.

The documents say (eg para 14.6.1 of the sixth document) that it is RVR's aspiration that additional visitors to RVR will arrive by train. But this is simply an aspiration rather than an expectation and so is irrelevant unless it is clear how the aspiration will be achieved. Para 14.6.1 says it is not anticipated that significant additional vehicle journeys will be generated, and says this factor can be discounted.

This looks to me that it may be wrong for two reasons.

First, many visitors may not live near the mainline and so may not use it - I can see no reason to suppose that only people living near the existing mainline will be visitors.

Secondly, the visitors can be expected to appear largely at weekends and bank holidays. National Rail frequently closes part of this mainline at weekends and bank holidays to carry out essential engineering works, with rail replacement services (ie buses) in operation somewhere on the route. On these occasions I think visitors are far more likely to drive than use the mainline.

I think there will be a substantial number of additional vehicles bringing visitors to Robertsbridge and the question arises as to where they will be parked.

Para 13.4 18 of the sixth document says the availability of the existing station car park would be suitable for serving the development. But the station car park has only 75 spaces (para 13.3.11). Para 14.2.19 suggests 50,000 people each year might use RVR. I would expect the visits to be concentrated into the weekends and bank holidays in the summer months. Even if only half of the additional visitors start from Robertsbridge (ie half might start from Tenterden) then substantial numbers of people and vehicles are likely to be involved.

Robertsbridge has a small free car park which is well used by locals. There is also on-street parking, although space in the high street is often fully occupied. Additional car parking in the village arising from RVR would make the position very difficult for people (like me) who drive into the village centre to shop. If parking is difficult then people may shop elsewhere. This would result in an adverse economic impact on local businesses and I cannot see this has been reflected in the analysis.

Many of the houses in the high street do not have garages (because Robertsbridge is a medieval village) and their residents would suffer if existing parking spaces are impacted by RVR.

The fifth RVR document says no mitigation measures are seen as necessary for car parking on the basis many visitors will arrive on the mainline, and the others will park in the mainline station car park. As set out above I think this is unlikely to be right.

There appear to be other impacts which are not in the public interest, and which are mentioned in the fifth document: (1) an adverse ecological impact (para 4.5); and (2) significant flood risk effects during the operational phase of the scheme - and enhancement to the flood defences to mitigate this is not yet a committed part of the scheme (paras 4.6.11 and 4.6.12 detail the shortcomings).

There is also the impact of installing a level crossing on the A21 - this might lead to more accidents, and might also lead to vehicles trying to avoid level crossing delays by diverting through the narrow Robertsbridge high street.

On the evidence provided I don't think there is sufficient public interest to justify the human rights impact and the application should therefore be refused. However if you decide to proceed to inquiry or hearing (S11 TWA 1992) then I think the applicants should be required to provide analysis to include where visitors are likely to come from and the number of these who might be expected to use the mainline if it is operational; the number of weekends and bank holidays in 2017 when the mainline was affected by engineering works; the number of expected cars coming to Robertsbridge bringing visitors to RVR; and where these vehicles will park.

Finally, if the scheme proceeds and additional flood defences are needed as a result, then I think no part of the cost of these defences should fall on the public purse.

Yours faithfully,

Hugh Hedges

Sent from my iPad

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Shenaz Choudhary

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Reps/14A.

**From:** Hugh Hedge:  
**Sent:** 24 June 2018 18:32  
**To:** TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT  
**Subject:** Re: Rother Valley Railway: application made under the Transport and Works Act 1992

PS. Apologies for the grammatical error - should be 'yours sincerely'!

Regards,

Hugh

Sent from my iPad

> On 24 Jun 2018, at 13:35, Hugh Hedges  
>  
> Dear Ms Choudhary  
>  
> Your ref: TWA/18/APP/02/REP/14  
>  
> Thank you for your letter of 7 June. I am sorry for the delay in replying.  
>  
> Thank you for providing the guide to TWA Orders.  
>  
> I have no particular wish to speak or to be represented at an inquiry or hearing but I do want to ensure the matters I have raised receive consideration by the Inspector. I note from paragraph 5 of your letter that my representation will be made available to him/her, but will he/she necessarily read each representation (given that there could be lots of them) - is there a chance that my comments might be overlooked?  
>  
> If I have sight of the two MMU reports (which underpin figures provided in some of the applicant's documents) then I might have more comments to make, but until these reports are made available as part of this process I can't comment further. If you could please obtain copies of the reports from the applicants so that I and others can consider them early in the process then that would be helpful.  
>  
> I note that Inspectors make at least one site visit as a matter of course. It would be helpful if this visit is made not only to the site of the proposed works but also to the village high street and to Station Road so the Inspector can better appreciate my comments.  
>  
> If this application proceeds to an inquiry I would be grateful to receive a copy of the statement of matters please.  
>  
> Yours faithfully,  
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