

SOPP/53



Secretary of State for Transport  
c/o Transport & Works Act Orders Unit  
Department for Transport  
Zone 1/18  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London, SW1P 4DR

13 May 2018

Dear Sirs

**Ref: Rother Valley Railway Proposal to Extended Line from Bodiam to Robertsbridge**

We support the extension of the Rother Valley Railway from Bodiam to Robertsbridge. This railway is a valuable tourist attraction for both Kent and East Sussex and the line extension would enhance this attraction. The country side between Bodiam and Robertsbridge is unspoilt and the additional distance would greatly improve the attraction. It would also bring tourists directly into Robertsbridge and has the potential to improve the economy in this area. Also, albeit somewhat restricted, it has the potential to act as a feed into a mainline station which is greatly missing in this area.

The main objection appears to be the supposed delays which will occur due to a railway crossing on the A21 trunk road. In fact this line already has two crossings on a major trunk road, the A28 one just to the West of Tenterden and the other at Newenden adjacent to the station. Living in the area we use this road regularly and occasionally encounter the crossings when the gates are closed but apart from a two minute delay there are no other problems since these closures are generally outside commuting hours. As far as we are aware there have been no complaints with this arrangement.

Since we are also familiar with traffic conditions on the A21 which might be slightly higher than the A28 outside commuting hours a stop of two minutes should cause no real problems to journey times especially in view of the low frequency of trains, 10 crossings on operating days. Out of season there may be days when no trains are operating. Bearing in mind there are areas on the A21 when the road reduces to one lane it is highly unlikely that the rail crossing would be more disruptive than that.

There may be more of a delay during the construction of the crossing itself but with good planning and carrying out the work at low volume traffic times this can be greatly mitigated and the period kept short..

We must also comment on the survey carried out on 800 bikers resulting in 600 objection letters. Were these letters actually written by them or simply prepared forms supplied to them? If the latter then it is doubtful how convinced they were of the views they were expressing. The majority of these bikers possibly only use this section of the A21 once a year

hence they are unlikely to be greatly affected by this crossing, and this should be taken into account.

It is also noted that Amber Rudd MP and Greg Clark MP have objected to this proposal due to its impact on traffic on the A21 due to business opportunities created by the Bexhill to Hastings link road. Unfortunately these have not occurred due to the fact no thought appeared to have been given to the impact on traffic at either end of the road which causes major delays in rush hour. Sites earmarked for business enterprises remain unused. It seems to us it is better to rely on the tourist industry at this current time which can be improved by allowing this extension to the railway line.

In the future business in the area may well increase traffic density on the A21 but this would then require the road to have dual carriage way over its entire length. If such a situation is reached then with such major road works eliminating the crossing by bridge or tunnel would be insignificant compared to other costs.

Yours faithfully

P Tomsett

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