

From:
Sent: 30 May 2018 23:28
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Cc: chris.grayling.mp@parliament.uk
Subject: Compulsory purchase re Rother Valley Railway.

Dear Sirs,

As a long time resident of Robertsbridge I would like to object to the proposed compulsory purchase of land in order to link the Rother Valley Railway at Bodiam with Robertsbridge main line station. It is my understanding that these powers should only be used in the interest of the Public in general which does not seem to be the case here.

1. In order to create this line it will be necessary to install level crossings on three busy roads, two of which are much used link roads. The A21 in particular is known to be unsuitable for the current volume of traffic, indeed several plans have been made over recent years to improve traffic flow, mainly postponed due to the cost involved. The introduction of a crossing in regular use will only exacerbate the already existing problems. At peak times traffic is almost certain to back up to the nearest roundabout causing further disruption. The suggestion that the gates would only be closed for a short time is clearly unrealistic as anyone who has waited for up to ten minutes at the crossings on the fully automated main line, or at Bodiam whilst the present Rother Valley trains cross, will testify. I believe that it is Government policy to close as many level crossings as practical due to safety concerns, clearly the introduction of three new ones is in direct conflict to this policy.
2. The village of Robertsbridge suffers from an acute lack of parking facilities, many commuters regularly park in the village to avoid charges in the station car park. If the RVR attract the number of visitors that they predict the roads in and around the village are likely to come to a standstill. The suggestion that most visitors will come by mainline train is again totally unrealistic.
3. In recent years much time and money has been spent on attempts to reduce the risk of re-occurrence of the damaging flooding which has been experienced in and around the village. The plan has been to divert the flood waters onto an area of fields where they will do little damage, and naturally disperse. The provision of a railway would require building extensive embankments right across the middle of this area. This would negate the current flood prevention measures and require further major expense to rectify the problem.
4. The proposed route of the railway would cut right across an attractive area of countryside already enjoyed by many people. Not only residents but people passing through, holiday makers, tourists and not least people who walk the foot paths along the line of the old railway. Clearly the most affected would be the land owners, mainly farmers, who would experience major disruption to their livelihoods from the embankments, the line itself and the general disruption on the road in the surrounding area. Not to mention a large number of people crossing through their land, and no doubt an increase in litter. Much of the effected land is currently undisturbed for most of the time and the effect on the flora and fauna is certain to be detrimental. Although much is made of the picturesque Steam trains the fact is that, by far the majority of trains run would be pulled by diesel locomotives with all of the associated noise and pollution.
5. The suggestion that there would be some benefit to the retail outlets in the village is unlikely. Possibly the Coffee shop may see a small increase in trade but it is not conceivable that many railway visitors will take the walk into the High Street to buy a bunch of flowers or a second hand book. In general the benefits to a small number of railway enthusiasts would seem to be more that outweighed by the negative effects on a much larger number of people. Certainly not in the Public Interest.

John Smith