

From: Charles Everett
Sent: 30 May 2018 23:31
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Subject: Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order)

Dear Sir,

Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order)

I wish to register my strong objection to the application by the Rother Valley Railway for a Transport and Works Act order to 'construct, operate and maintain' a new railway line from Bodiam to Robertsbridge.

My objection is for the following main reasons.

First, it would create a significant traffic hazard. The proposal would require three additional level crossings. Level crossings are inherently a high risk and it is the policy of Network Rail to remove them wherever possible. One of the crossings would be across the busy A21 and would lead to significant delays and consequent inconvenience on a route which is already dangerous. The A21 is the major link into Hastings. Unlike many major roads, the traffic density on the A21 is additionally high at weekends, bank holidays and leisure periods because of day tripper journeys to Hastings and the seaside nearby. Another of the level crossings would cross the B2244, which in the relevant stretch is also a dangerous country road, especially because it is straight but undulating.

Second, it would lead to increased flood risk. This is not a 'once in a thousand years' theoretical risk. Robertsbridge suffered a devastating flood in 2000 which caused immense damage to properties throughout the village. The village has since benefited from a major and costly flood defence scheme which provides protection from the threat of a repeat of the 2000 flood. The proposed route would run through the flood plain and inevitably affect protection provided by the current defence scheme.

Third, the proposal would cause environmental damage in an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) and the fragile environment of the flood plain. The track bed no longer exists, so the proposed extension would be a new railway, not a reinstatement. The proposal is not supported by a land based study of its impact on the rare and protected species found in the area.

Fourth, there is insufficient public interest to justify a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) of property integral to existing farming businesses. The proposed new railway route is not by any definition essential infrastructure. Allowing a CPO in this case would allow one group of private individuals, the RVR, to commandeer property owned by other private individuals, with no consequent commensurate public benefit having been adequately demonstrated.

For these reasons, the proposal should be rejected, at least without a full public enquiry to assess the true impact of the scheme.

Yours faithfully,

Charles Everett

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