

Obj 1697

Secretary of State for Transport,
c/o Transports and Works Act Orders Unit,
General Counsel's Office,
Department for Transport Zone 1/18,
Great Minster House,
33 Horseferry Road,
London,
SW1P 4DR

30th May 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY (BODIAM TO ROBERTSBRIDGE JUNCTION) ORDER

I am writing to object to the Rother Valley Railway application for a Transport and Works Act Order to construct, operate and maintain a new railway for the following reasons:

Harmful environmental impacts: situated in a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the construction and running of a railway would cause unacceptable harm to flora, fauna and habitats in the area including European Protected Species such as great crested newts, dormice, and bats. Other species affected are water voles, badgers, bats, grass snakes, owls, buzzards, and kingfishers. There would be loss of ancient woodland, scrub, hedgerows, ponds and flood plain marsh. The proposed development conflicts with the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, and would destroy the tranquillity and beauty of a unique rural valley.

Lack of socio-economic benefit: There is no evidence that there will be any tangible economic or sustainable benefit to the village of Robertsbridge. The proposal is for a non-essential tourist attraction driven by train enthusiasts who are not considering the community as a whole, and is funded privately by benefactors who do not live locally. The application for a Compulsory Purchase order is a divisive and negative action, and if granted would adversely impact local farmers' livelihoods and access to their land.

Level Crossing impact – RVR predict 14 crossing closures per day, creating inconvenience, congestion and pollution due 3 new level crossing over 3 roads. The associated pollution from waiting vehicles will contribute to increased carbon emissions. The extra 125kg CO₂ released from each train journey equates to a diesel car travelling 650 miles. This is in conflict with the Government's commitment to reducing CO₂ emission to mitigate global warming.

Lack of infrastructure - there is no provision for additional infrastructure or parking at Robertsbridge to cope with the potential 50,000 additional visitors to the attraction.

Flood Plain vulnerability - The site lies within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 3 which is described as having a high probability of flooding. Construction of a railway across flood plains may compromise the flood plain and flood protection measures.

I urge to consider these views when examining the application.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Griffin