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From: james morgan [REDACTED]
Sent: 31 May 2018 18:56
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Cc: james morgan
Subject: Objection to RVR rail link from Bodiam to Robertsbridge

James morgan
[REDACTED]

30/05/2018

Ref RR/2014/1608/P

Dear Mr Grayling MP & associates,

It is with a heavy heart and a feeling of regret that I am writing to you about the application by RVR for a TWAO and CPO to claim land from long standing residents who have farmed the land in question for over 100 years. The purpose of this application to join a currently run heritage rail line that stops at Northiam, with track that extends to Bodiam to an unfinished section of track at Robertsbridge.

My reason for my letter of objection is based on many factors regarding this supposedly beneficial re-building of a long forgotten rail line that was closed down & track removed in the 50s and 60s due lack of use, financial loss and more modern modes of transportation.

My first objection to the proposed rail line is my exceedingly deep worry about what the new rail line & it's obviously massive impact it will have when they try to re-build the line on the flood plains that run through the valley of Robertsbridge & Bodiam respectively. Having been born & lived my entire life in Robertsbridge, now Salehurst for the last 6 years, I have first hand knowledge of the floods that annually cause major problems down through the valley in question.

My property is situated approximately 240mtrs from the original track bed that ran through the fields below my garden. The only other property as close as this is Salisbury house/villa which is situated in Northbridge street opposite the Mill site. In the flood of 2000, this property was flooded, with the water level reaching almost 5 feet above ground level. My property which is in the adjacent field next the track bed in Salehurst often comes under threat from flooding.

Although the flood defence system now in place due to the floods of 2000 is protecting some of Robertsbridge, my property is not protected by this defence system. Going on formal plans put in by RVR, I will be subject to greater risk due to the embankments that are required to carry out the re-construction of this rail line. In some places the embankments are to reach 6mtrs in height to be able to pass over the A21 bypass. With the construction of such huge embankments I will surely be subject to worsening flooding. On a personal note not a single representative of RVR has approached me trying to elevate my concerns of this matter.

My second objection to this application is regarding the 3 level crossings that are required to complete this rail line. Although on modern railways the crossings are normally associated with electronic operations on slow village and town crossings, the crossings that are needed to complete this rail line are on some of the most dangerous & heavily trafficked roads in the country. Firstly the line will have to cross the B2244 at Bodiam. This section of road is unique as it has 2 rather narrow bridges that sandwich the proposed rail line. Secondly the speed normally associated with this road is always on the limit of the national speed limit. This makes for an incredibly dangerous section of road. The second crossing will be on the A21 bypass at Robertsbridge. This road has been classed as one of the most dangerous in the country. But more than any trouble regarding accidents that rail crossings cause, it's the fact that

the rail line will seriously effect traffic flow from hurst green through the crossing then onto neighbouring johns cross and beyond. On a normal working day and weekend the road is exceptionally busy, with May Day traffic being even heavier, including bank holidays as people travel from up north to the coast on this road.

The other major concern for me about this crossing on the A21 reverts back to the flood issue. This road was built with culverts that's try to elevate high water. Unfortunately these haven't been considerable enough in the past, with the environment agency having to increase the flow in high flooding with the implementation of water pumps. Any other alteration to this, which the rail line would need, would be catastrophic from the flooding element of this road.

Hopefully a full and just inquiry will be held so that others can produce information and facts that support this, rather than excepting the reports of RVR on merit to obviously help there cause.

The third crossing will be several hundred meters away situated in Northbridge street. This crossing in itself is a complete mockery of the formation of the A21 bypass in the first place as all the heavy traffic used to travel through the little village causing untold chaos & damage. That is one of the reasons the bypass was constructed to elevate the traffic flow through the village. Now with a crossing on the main A21, traffic coming from hurst green and beyond will be inclined to try & cut through the village. This will in turn cause trouble with heavy traffic flow running through the village.

My third objection to the application lies with the possibility that many rare and endangered species will be seriously effected & possibly killed due to the nature of the build required to re-join the tracks together in the valley that runs its length. The removal of hundreds of trees, destruction of well established habitats, with no contingency to help relocate them or plan in place to elevate what will be a mass building site for many years if this application is approved. You can't turn back time and to try and turn back nature's best and hope it recovers is in this day and age is a seriously misguided approach, especially when the whole world is striving to gain back the wrongs of the past. We must preserve what we have & what's grown in its place for the last 50 or 60 years, not go about destroying it to make way for a bygone mode of travel that runs sufficiently well in its current form as it is from tenterden to Northiam.

My forth objection to this application lies with many forms of information provided by RVR to help there cause. Some of these include positives & projections based on theory that make this rail line look like a good thing for Robertsbridge & a few surrounding areas. RVR are stating that the link would bring in revenue for the village? Tourism for the village?

Firstly anyone traveling from the existing line at Northiam/ Bodiam will not want to extend there travel time to visit Robertsbridge. Many tourists enjoy historical places to visit & shops to look in, and these are currently provided with Bodiam castle and Tenterden offering a vast number of shops & historical buildings to look at. There is no reason for the rail passengers to extend there trip when these are already available at these destinations. Secondly if people arrive to travel from Robertsbridge they will more than likely arrive by car. With this comes chaos, as Robertsbridge already suffers from extreme commuter parking problems, especially langham road, Bell hurst road any many others in the village. Any extra commuter car parking would not be acceptable.

Thirdly is the claim by RVR of the formation on approx 75 jobs to the local community. This is utterly false and a claim that should be investigated whole heartedly. The existing line is voluntary run and any other jobs would surely be the same. The line itself is loss making without this fact that is run by volunteers. It's only able to run at its current level due to wealthy benefactors, who are also footing the bill for this application.

Based on my feelings and the above letter I completely and wholeheartedly object to this application of the TWAO and CPO. I feel that not only is this project morally wrong on many levels, it is also completely unpractical, not needed in any way, and most importantly a complete waste of time, disruption to others including established farmers, home owners and the valley as a whole.

Any acknowledgement would be grateful received and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully
James morgan
Charlotte butterworth.

Sent from my iPad