

**Transport and Works Act 1992**

**The Transport and Works (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 2004**

**The Proposed Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction)**

**Summary of Proof of Evidence of Jonathan Portlock**

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- 1.1.1 This proof of evidence considers the work we (Arup) carried out to assess the feasibility of level and grade separated crossing of the A21(T). This evidence complements that of Mr Phil Hamshaw and Mr David Keay and should be read in conjunction with their proof of evidence, Mr Phil Hamshaw covering highway aspects and Mr David Keay covering the railway aspects.
- 1.1.2 This proof covers paragraph 2 of the Secretary of State's Statement of Matters:  
*Paragraph 2 – the main alternative options considered by the promoter and the reasons for choosing the proposals comprised in the scheme:*
- 1.1.3 Arup was commissioned to provide a feasibility options report for crossing the A21(T). This report considered the technical engineering feasibility and provided budget cost estimates for comparison of methods for crossing the A21(T).
- 1.1.4 This proof of evidence is concerned with addressing the engineering practicalities/feasibility of crossing the A21 and describes how we normally address this type of work, how the work for the crossing was carried out, the competences of those carrying the work out and a summary of the report and its conclusions. This Proof of Evidence should be read together with the A21(T) Crossing Options Feasibility Report reference REP/239025/R002 (**RVR 076**).
- 1.1.5 The options assessment has considered the feasibility and (industry standard) construction costs of each crossing option to provide a “like for like” comparison between the option. The purpose of the assessment was to establish whether there was

gross disproportion in terms of the alternative crossing options when compared with an at-grade crossing.

- 1.1.6 The options assessment concluded that using industry standard allowances, the level crossing option is some £4.5M cheaper than the least expensive alternative option (rail under road with highway realignment), rendering the other options considered very significantly more expensive in the context of the overall £5.3 million costs of building this single track railway (as set out in RVR's Estimate of Costs submitted with its application for the Order). If one compares the next lowest cost option with the actual costs of the level crossing delivered by a combination of experienced volunteers and contractors, then the difference is £9.8M (a ratio of 7.5:1).
- 1.1.7 As a result of this the ORR concluded (in para 35 of its SoC) that it would be grossly disproportion to grade separate the junction between the railway and the A21(T) and that a tolerably safe level crossing could be created.
- 1.1.8 This proof of evidence concluded that:
1. The feasibility study has shown that all options are technically feasible to construct but have varying challenges.
  2. The work carried out by Arup was conducted by competent people and using industry recognised methods and therefore it is reasonable to assume that the outcomes of the study are accurate.
  3. The study demonstrates that grade separating the junction would be grossly disproportionate. The ORR's expert panel was satisfied that this was the case. Therefore, a level crossing is the appropriate solution to crossing the A21(T) from a construction challenge and cost perspective.