



I Jenkins  
Inspector  
**Ref: SUPP-80**

Sir Peter Hendy CBE  
Chair, Network Rail  
Waterloo General Offices  
Waterloo Station  
London SE1 8SW

3 August 2021

Dear Mr Jenkins,

Please find attached my closing statement to the RVR inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Hendy", written over a light blue grid background.

**Sir Peter Hendy CBE**  
**Chair**



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Sir Peter Hendy CBE  
Chair, Network Rail  
Waterloo General Offices  
Waterloo Station  
London SE1 8SW

I am Sir Peter Hendy CBE, Chair of Network Rail, Great Britain's railway infrastructure owner. I am appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport, and was appointed in 2015, having previously been the Commissioner of Transport for London, in which position I was not only responsible for railway infrastructure but also London's trunk road network.

I wrote to the then Secretary of State in May 2018, with Network Rail's support for the RVR scheme, and more recently in June 2021.

I have no personal interest in the RVR or the Kent & East Sussex Railway companies.

- 1) Network Rail supports connectivity by rail because there is ample evidence that connectivity enables economic growth, jobs, housing and social cohesion. This applies as much to tourist railways as other railways, and is particularly relevant to one that seeks to remake a connection with the main line railway, which this scheme does.
- 2) The present Government has an explicit policy to reopen closed railways for the reasons I set out above. I referred the Inquiry to the Restoring Your Railway public website where the Government sets out why it has that policy. The RVR project is exceptional as it would deliver a Restoring Your Railway project at no cost to the British taxpayer.
- 3) The applicants are professional, knowledgeable and with great experience of rebuilding closed railways; Mike Hart OBE and David Keay are respected figures not only in railway preservation but in the railway industry more generally. Mr Hart was the leader of the successful project to rebuild the Welsh Highland Railway (WHR), 40km long, and was awarded the OBE for his part in that project. Mr Keay, as a former Deputy Chief Inspector of Railways for the Office of Rail and Road, has extensive experience of the operations and safety of both main line and preserved railways. The Welsh Highland Railway rebuild involved a unique rail/rail crossing of the WHR with Network Rail's main Cambrian Coast line, which is unique, and was accomplished with little difficulty because of the professional way the project was approached; it also involved a number of road crossings. Both Transport for London and Network Rail staff have participated in the rebuilding of the RVR Robertsbridge terminus for training purposes and to support these professional leaders.
- 4) Network Rail does not generally support new level crossings and generally seeks to close as many as we can of those we have, because the national railway network is increasingly busy with trains weighing up to 3,000 tons that travel at speeds of up to 125mph, up to 24 hours a day; we are principally concerned about the risk of a catastrophic train accident as a result of a road/rail collision. In that we have the support of the Office of Rail and Road, the rail safety regulator. But we have no substantive lines like the proposed Rother Valley Railway, where the trains would be short, their numbers low, the service seasonal, and the speed of trains on crossings would be as low as 10mph. In this case, we support the RVR proposals as the risks will be insignificant compared with those on the national network; as do the Office of Rail and Road. I noted the verbal suggestion that we have sought to close crossing(s) of a similar nature, but have seen no evidence that is in fact the case.



- 5) In any event, the Restoring Your Railway schemes the Government are pursuing do involve us reopening crossings; the Exeter to Okehampton line which we are in the course of reopening to passengers has several disused crossings which we are reopening as the only practicable method of restoring the railway. It is clearly unusual to look to open a crossing on a trunk Highways England road, because there are far fewer of them. But I note that

(a) the Highways Agency, Highways England's predecessor body, was content to sign off the proposal in principle,

(b) that the 'departures submission' process that Highways England rightly requires to validate its own road safety procedures is proceeding, and following a supportive conversation I had with the Chair of Highways England, from a recent email from their Regional Director to Mr Hart it seems that many concerns have been resolved and only a small number remain, and are in active course of resolution, and

(c) that acting in my role as an assessor of all the Restoring Your Railway schemes, for the Secretary of State, I know of another scheme in North West England that has a strong case which will involve a similar crossing of a single carriageway Highways England road. That scheme will likely be supported by Government so I am sure Highways England will want to perfect the departures submission on the RVR as it will form the basis of another future case on the A5.

Given all the above, and particularly given the explicit Government policy to reopen closed railways (including lines for tourist travel), and the economic growth, jobs, housing and social cohesion prospects which result from better rail connectivity, and the remarkable prospect of this reopening without taxpayer funding, Network Rail fully supports the application, and warmly welcomes the prospect of a reduction of car travel in the vicinity of the line created by the travel opportunities of the future connection with the main line railway at Robertsbridge.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Peter Hendy", written over a light blue grid background.

**Sir Peter Hendy CBE**  
**Chair**  
**Network Rail**  
**3 August 2021**

## Brenda Taplin

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**Subject:** FW: ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY PUBLIC INQUIRY - URGENT PLEASE

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**From:** Peter Hendy (Chair) >

**Sent:** 04 August 2021 09:01

**To:** Brenda Taplin <[Brenda.Taplin@gateleyhamer.com](mailto:Brenda.Taplin@gateleyhamer.com)>; Clare Irvine

**Cc:** Richard Turney; Jane Wakeham; >; Emma Rodican-Jones ; pbrown; David Warman; Paul.Harwood; [toni.macey;](mailto:toni.macey@susanna.weatherstone)  
[susanna.weatherstone](mailto:susanna.weatherstone); Mark Westmoreland Smith ; Shauna Devlin <[Shauna.Devlin](mailto:Shauna.Devlin)>; Clare Irvine;

**Subject:** Re: ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY PUBLIC INQUIRY - URGENT PLEASE

OFFICIAL

Thank you. In that case, and so as not to inconvenience the Inspector nor delay the inquiry, I am absolutely contact for it to be taken as a written representation only.

with best wishes, and keep safe and well

Peter

Sir Peter Hendy CBE

Chair

Network Rail &

London Legacy Development Corporation

Trustee

London Transport Museum &

Science Museum Group

I work flexibly - so whilst it suits me to email  
outside normal working hours, I do not expect a response outside your own.

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**From:** Brenda Taplin <[Brenda.Taplin@gateleyhamer.com](mailto:Brenda.Taplin@gateleyhamer.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 4, 2021 8:18 am

**To:** Peter Hendy (Chair); Clare Irvine

**Cc:** Richard Turney; Jane Wakeham; Emma Rodican-Jones; [pbrown](mailto:pbrown); David Warman; Paul.Harwood; [toni.macey](mailto:toni.macey);  
[susanna.weatherstone](mailto:susanna.weatherstone); Mark Westmoreland Smith

**Subject:** ROTHER VALLEY RAILWAY PUBLIC INQUIRY - URGENT PLEASE

Hello Sir Peter

I refer to your submission of a closing statement, dated 3 August 2021.

The Inspector has asked me to draw your attention to the sections of his pre-Inquiry notes to participants (set out on the Inquiry webpage) regarding the submission of evidence. Having reviewed your closing statement, he notes that paragraph 5 seeks to introduce new evidence at a late stage in the proceedings, contrary to the approach set out in the pre-Inquiry notes.

In the event that you wish to appear at the Inquiry to give that new evidence, it would be necessary to do so at the start of the session today, scheduled for noon, in advance of the closing submissions of others. Such evidence would

be open to cross-examination and parties who oppose the draft Order may then wish to consider the need to respond by calling evidence. This approach would be likely to delay the proceedings.

Alternatively, the statement may be taken as a written representation only, to which those opposing the draft Order would be given an opportunity to respond in writing.

**Please confirm by return this morning, whether you intend to appear as set out above, or are content for the statement to be taken as a written representation.**

Brenda

**Brenda Taplin**  
**Senior Land Referencer & Public Inquiry Programme Officer**  
for Gateley Hamer  
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