

Report

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TEMPLE

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Report for – Rother Valley Railway
Rother Valley Railway Track Reinstatement project
Environmental Statement and supporting information guide (Explanatory Note)



Document version control

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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to sign-post the suite of environmental information produced in support of the Transport and Works Act application for the Rother Valley Track Reinstatement Project.

Since the preparation of the original Environmental Statement (ES) in 2014, additional environmental work has been undertaken in order to address specific stakeholder requests and to ensure that the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) remain valid in the context of changes to the receiving environment, assessment methodologies and planning and policy over time.

This brief report will explain the information submitted as part of the environmental assessment work, the chronology of their production and the purpose of each report.

1.1.1 Environmental Statement and supporting documents

There are six core reports which form the environmental appraisal for the Rother Valley Track Reinstatement Project, which are shown chronologically in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Suite of environmental reports for the Rother Valley Track Reinstatement Project

2021	Environmental Statement 2021 Update Report	
	Non-Technical Summary - 2021	
2020		
2019		
2018	Air Quality Statement	
2017	Environmental Statement Addendum- 2017	
2016	Environmental Statement Addendum- 2016	
2015		
2014	Environmental Statement	

2.0 The Environmental Statement and supporting documentation

2.1 Environmental Statement (2014)

Rother Valley Railway (RVR) submitted a Town and Country planning application to Rother District Council, which was accompanied by an ES in June 2014. The ES reported the findings of the detailed EIA undertaken and was prepared based on the topic assessments agreed with Rother District Council during the scoping stage (scoping request submitted in October 2013) and subsequently confirmed in their formal Scoping Opinion (issued January 2014). The Environmental Statement consisted of 4 volumes.

Environmental Statement Volume	Description
Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary	A broad overview of the Proposed Scheme and the key findings of the EIA presented using non-technical language.
Volume 2: Main Statement	Provides a description of the EIA process and the likely effects of the Scheme, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details the Scheme proposal; • Alternatives considered; Construction methodology; • Operational regime; • Summary of the likely environmental effects for each discipline; • Proposed mitigation and residual effects of the Scheme for each discipline; and • Description of cumulative effects.
Volume 3: Technical and Supporting Reports	Comprises Technical Reports which supplement the assessment contained within Volume 2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope and Methodology Report • Scoping Opinion (Rother District Council) • Ecology Phase 1 Habitat Survey • Flood Risk Assessment • Water Framework Directive Screening Assessment • Contaminated Land Assessment
Volume 4: Figures	Figures to support the Main Statement (Volume 2)

2.2 Environmental Statement Addendum 2016

Following submission of the Town and County planning application, but prior to its determination, changes to the Scheme design were proposed and supplementary ecology information was made available at the request of the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) ecologist. As a result, an ES Addendum was finalised in November 2016, providing further explanation and information in relation to the assessment of impacts on the ecology within and adjacent to the project site following consultation with the ESCC ecologist. It also sets out the proposed changes to the Scheme and considers whether these changes have any material effect on the findings of the EIA as set out in the original 2014 ES.

2.3 Environmental Statement Addendum 2017

As part of the TWAO application process, RVR sought a Scoping Opinion from the Secretary of State (SoS) on 12 May 2017 in accordance with Rule 8 of the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2006. That Scoping Opinion was received on 22 June 2017 and confirmed that the environmental information submitted as part of the scoping request (2014 ES and the 2016 ES Addendum) would provide an ES of sufficient scope for the purposes of a TWAO application, subject to the provision of additional assessment of the Scheme against the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

A further addendum to the ES was prepared which addressed the June 2017 Scoping Opinion request for consideration of the Scheme in the context of the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

2.4 Air Quality Statement

The report (Track Reinstatement between Northbridge Street and Junction Road. Air Quality Statement-Level Crossings and Rolling Stock) focussed on air quality impacts from the operation of trains within the Scheme, and as a consequence of vehicle traffic, changes associated with the operation of the proposed level-crossings. The report was produced to address stakeholder responses.

2.5 Environmental Statement 2021 Update Report

To support the public inquiry, an update report was prepared which reviewed the findings of the 2014 ES and subsequent addenda in the context of any changes to the baseline that may have occurred in the intervening period. This revalidation sought to review changes to the receiving environment, updates in available environmental data, changes to planning policy and plans and changes to discipline specific assessment methodologies. The purpose of the exercise was to revalidate the original ES findings in order to give continued confidence in the assessment conclusions for the purposes of determining the application.

At the request of the Planning Inspector additional topic assessments were undertaken to reflect the 2014 EIA Directive (2014/52/EU), which was transposed into UK law in 2017. These included assessment of Major Accident and Disasters, Human Health and Climate Change.

2.6 Non-Technical Summary 2021

An updated Non-Technical Summary Report to replace the original 2014 ES Volume 1 Report to reflect the revalidation work undertaken.

3.0 Request for further environmental information

On the 8th June 2020, a request was submitted to Rother Valley Railway Limited for additional environmental information. The following section responds to each request and directs the reader to where the relevant information is provided.

Information Requested	Where this can be found
Description of the Scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated construction and operation programme 	ES Update Report (2021). Section 3, Table 3.1. Updated construction programme Section 3.3 Operation
Noise and vibration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated assessment or explanation of why original the assessment remains valid 	ES Update Report (2021). Section 5. Revalidation of the noise and vibration assessment
Air Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated construction dust assessment Updated assessment of emissions to air arising from traffic at level-crossings A detailed explanation of significance assigned to SO₂ and NO_x emissions Further details regarding the potential effects at identified receptor points surrounding the proposed engine shed 	ES Update Report (2021). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 6.2.6 (Construction Dust Risk Assessment) Section 6.3.2 – 6.3.10 (Level Crossing Air Quality Assessment) Section 6.3.11 – 6.3.15 (Potential Impacts from Heritage Railway Steam and Diesel Engines) Section 6.3.16 -6.3.22 (Potential Impacts near the Proposed Engine Shed)
Landscape and Visual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A detailed description of lighting required at level-crossings Details of landscape screening for Robertsbridge Abbey 	ES Revalidation Report (2021). Paragraph 3.1.2 – description of level-crossing lighting Paragraph 3.1.3- description of landscape screening between railway and Robertsbridge Abbey
Ecology and Nature Conservation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated baseline data search and assessment of effects Provision of targeted species survey information or explanation as to why access has not become available. 	ES Revalidation Report (2021). Section 8

<p>Water quality, hydrology and hydrogeology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated flood risk assessment making appropriate allowance for climate change • Justification in support of the worst case assessment of likely significant effects to water quality • Updated Water Framework Directive assessment • Updated description of methodology and approach used to collect baseline data 	<p>ES Revalidation Report (2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 9 -Water Quality, Hydrology and Hydrogeology • Appendix G – Flood Risk Assessment • Appendix C – Water Framework Directive Assessment
<p>Land Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appendices to ES Volume 3, Section 6 	<p>Separate upload to the inquiry website (Core documents)</p>
<p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated transport assessment chapter 	<p>ES Revalidation Report (2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix F
<p>Socio-economics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated socio-economic assessment 	<p>ES Revalidation Report (2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 13 (Socio-economics)
<p>Land-use and agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed justification explaining why the conclusion of no residual significant effects in relation to construction or operation remains representative 	<p>ES Revalidation Report (2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 14 (Land Use and agriculture)
<p>Cumulative effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An updated cumulative effects assessment 	<p>ES Revalidation Report (2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 19 (Cumulative Effects)
<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of significant effects in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -climate change -human health 	<p>ES Revalidation Report (2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 17 (Climate Change) • Section 15 (Human Health) • Section 16 (Major Accident Hazards and Disasters) • Appendix I (Reference List)

<p>-major accident or disasters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A reference list• An explanatory note detailing the documents that comprise the Environmental Statement• A revised non-technical summary	<p>Environmental Statement and supporting information guide (Explanatory Note) (2021).</p> <p>Non-Technical Summary (2021)</p>
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