



# Rother Valley Railway A21 Robertsbridge

Non-Motorised User (NMU) Audit - Context  
Report

January 2013

Rother Valley Railway Limited





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Robertsbridge Junction (RVR) Station, Station Road, Robertsbridge, Sussex,  
TN32 5DG



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# Executive Summary

The Kent and East Sussex Railway (KESR) operates between Tenterden in Kent and Bodiam Castle in East Sussex. The line is currently difficult to access by public transport.

The Rother Valley Railway (RVR) Heritage Trust is currently reconstructing the railway line between the line's current terminus at Bodiam and Robertsbridge Junction Station to enable the direct interchange of passengers between KESR and the mainline railway network. Once complete that will enable visitors to use the country's public transport system to access the KESR and to use the line as a leisure transport corridor serving popular attractions such as the National Trust's Bodiam Castle and the historic town of Tenterden.

This report sets out the Non-Motorised User (NMU) Context Report requirements as defined in the Highways Agency standard HD42/05 'Non-Motorised User Audits'. The NMU Context Report provides a summary of all available information relevant to existing and potential patterns of use by NMUs within the design life of the scheme.

This NMU Context Report sets out the opportunities and objectives to improve conditions for NMUs in relation to the proposed scheme.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This NMU Context Report has been prepared at the outset of the preliminary design and relates to footways, footpaths, public rights of way (PROW), permissive paths, cycleways and other local routes potentially impacted upon by the proposed A21 Rother Valley Railway level crossing proposal. It has been prepared following the guidance given in the Highways Agency's standard HD42/05 – Non-Motorised User Audits.

The report takes into account work to date with respect to NMUs, primarily in relation to the existing route and also to adjacent communities and suggests mitigation measures (where appropriate).

It is understood that as part of the scheme development, an Environmental Statement has not yet been prepared. It is envisaged that this statement will be prepared at a later date as part of the Transport & Works Act / Level Crossing Order application process.

## 2. Scheme Description

### 2.1 Overview

The proposal comprises the construction of a new full-barrier controlled railway level crossing across the A21(T) Robertsbridge Bypass, some 135m south of the existing roundabout with the C18 (Northbridge Street).

View of A21 looking south towards proposed level crossing site



Source: Mott MacDonald

The A21 at this location is a two-lane, two-way all purpose trunk road (APTR). The carriageway cross-section at this location is 7.3m wide with 1.0m wide hardstrips. For the purposes of this assessment, it is considered as being of 'S2' standard.

The location of the proposed level crossing site is shown overleaf in **Figure 2-1**.



## 3. Policy Context

### 3.1 Planning and the Strategic Road Network

The policy context in which this process is being developed is twofold, and is outlined as follows: -

#### The Level Crossing Approval Process

The proposed restoration of the railway, and the construction of the associated level crossings, is proposed to be enacted under the Transport & Works Act (TWA) and/or Level Crossings Act (LCA), 1983.

The lead Government Authority in the making of an Order to construct and operate a Level Crossing is the Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR).

The process for seeking Powers to Construct and Operate a railway level crossing is detailed in Office of the Rail Regulator document: 'Level Crossings: A guide for managers, designers and operators. Railway Safety Publication No. 7. December 2011'. That can be found at:

[http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/upload/pdf/level\\_crossings\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/upload/pdf/level_crossings_guidance.pdf)

RVR has developed and refined designs and specifications for the proposed crossing that have been considered at length by the overseeing organisation, the ORR.

Following completion of the initial stage of the level crossing approval process 20th January 2012 the ORR issued a Letter of No Objection in Principle to the proposed level crossings.

As detailed in the procedural guidelines for such an application, RVR now seeks to consult with the Local Highway Authority(s) as consultees in the level crossing approval process. This process of consultation began in early 2012.

#### Department for Transport / Highways Agency Development Protocols

The Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 02/2007 March 2007 sets out the parameters for development on the Highways Agency (HA) network.

This states that: -

*42. The Agency will adopt a graduated and less restrictive approach to accesses on the remainder of the strategic road network, but there will still be a presumption in favour of using existing accesses and junctions. Any additional junctions or increased junction capacity should be identified in the LDD and/or RTS and will be considered within the context of the Agency's forward programme of works.*

*43. Regardless of the status of the road, developers will be required to ensure that their proposals comply in all respects with design standards and other requirements. Where there would be physical changes to the network, schemes must be submitted to road safety and non-motorised user audit procedures. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges sets out details of the Secretary of State's requirements for access design and audit. If necessary, further advice is available from the Agency. The Secretary of State may direct that planning permission not be granted for any planning application which fails to meet these requirements or which, for any other reason, raises significant safety concerns.*

*44. The Agency should be consulted on any development proposals where a new access onto a local road is required, which in turn feeds a strategic road and has the potential for a material effect.*

*45. LPAs will need to consult the Agency over any development which may affect the users of a strategic road, even though it may not lead to an increase in traffic. Examples of such development would include earth mounds, wind farms and golf courses. The Agency should also be consulted on applications for signs or advertisements visible from the strategic road network."*

## 4. NMU Activity

### 4.1 NMU Flows

Mott MacDonald has been unable to directly source data from any public authority relating to pedestrian, cycle and equestrian activity along the A21 at Robertsbridge (between the roundabout with the C18 to the north and the roundabout with the A2100 to the south).

However, as part of the scheme development proposals, RVR has undertaken a number of surveys to conduct counts of NMU movement along the A21 at the location of the proposed level crossing in order to quantify the level of activity that does occur.

Initial surveys conducted by RVR on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012 for the 12-hour period 0700-1900 showed that no pedestrians, cyclists or horses were recorded as passing the site.

Further surveys conducted at the site of the proposed A21 level crossing on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2013 for the 12-hour period 0700-1900 again showed that no pedestrians, cyclists or horses were recorded as passing the site. The results of both surveys are provided at **Appendix A**.

Furthermore, Mott MacDonald considers that there is likely to be no, or little, NMU activity along this section of the A21. This is based on the premise that the A21 at this location acts as a bypass to the east of Robertsbridge and its primary function is the efficient and expeditious movement of traffic, north–south along the A21 corridor.

Nevertheless, the use of the A21 at this location does permit the passage of NMU traffic and so this report considers the pedestrian, cycle and equestrian usage even though those flows are clearly extremely low.

#### 4.1.1 Pedestrians and pedestrian routes

There is no pedestrian provision along the A21(T) Robertsbridge Bypass.

Signed pedestrian routes run perpendicular to the A21 near the location of the proposed level crossing. However, these are situated in adjacent fields and grazing land and do not necessitate the crossing of the A21. There is also an overbridge for east-west movements located approximately 200 metres south of the location of the proposed level crossing, near Redlands Lane.

The location of adjoining footpaths, bridleways and cycleways are shown in **Figure 4.1** overleaf.

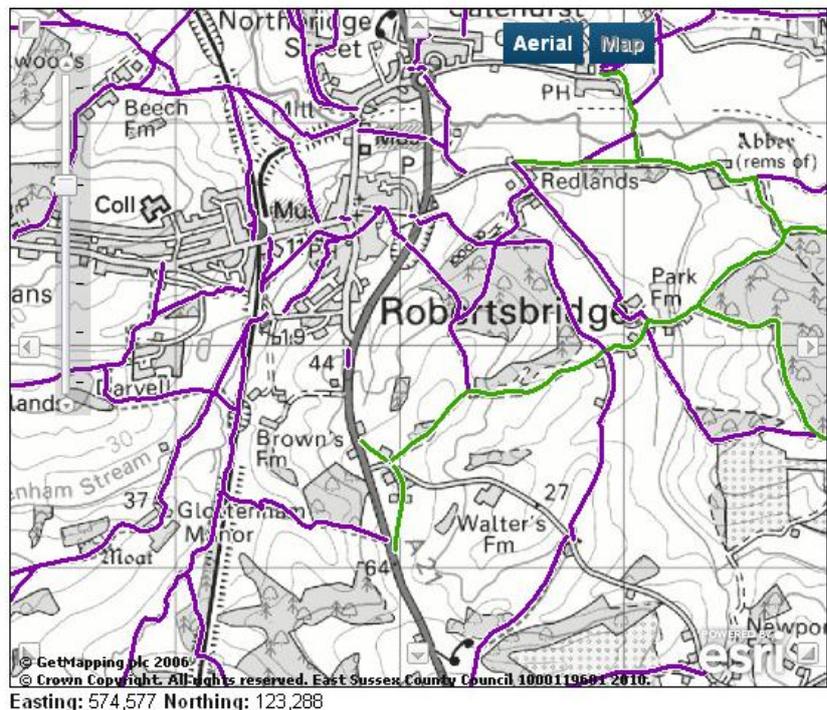
**4.1.2 Cyclists and cycle routes**

According to the Sustrans website ([www.sustrans.org](http://www.sustrans.org)) the A21 does not form part of the National Cycle Network at this location.

There are 1.0m wide hardstrips along which cyclists can potentially travel and at the time of a site visit in October 2012 are considered to be relatively free of detritus.

Figure 4-1 shows the location of current footpaths, cycleways and bridleways in the Robertsbridge area.

Figure 4-1: Location of footpaths, bridleways, cycleways etc



Source: East Sussex County Council website ([www.eastsussex.gov.uk](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk))

Key:-

- Footpaths
- Bridleways

- Licensed Cycleway

It can be seen, that the A21 does not form part of any other function for cyclists, pedestrians or equestrians.

There is one footpath that passes beneath the A21 close to the site of the proposed level crossing.

#### 4.1.3 Equestrians and equestrian routes

Figure 4-1 above shows the location of existing bridleways. None of these are affected by the scheme proposal.

#### 4.1.4 Flows and speed of motorised traffic

The Highways Agency publishes traffic data collected from Automatic Traffic Counters (ATCs) at various locations on the motorway and trunk road network on their TRADS2 website (<http://trads.hatris.co.uk/>). Data for the whole of 2011 is available and hourly traffic flows have been downloaded for use in this study from two sites on the A21:

- Site No. T/04/215 – southbound on the A21 Robertsbridge Bypass southern section (Grid reference E574125, N124015)
- Site No. T/04216 – northbound on the A21 Robertsbridge Bypass southern section (Grid reference E574128, N123929)

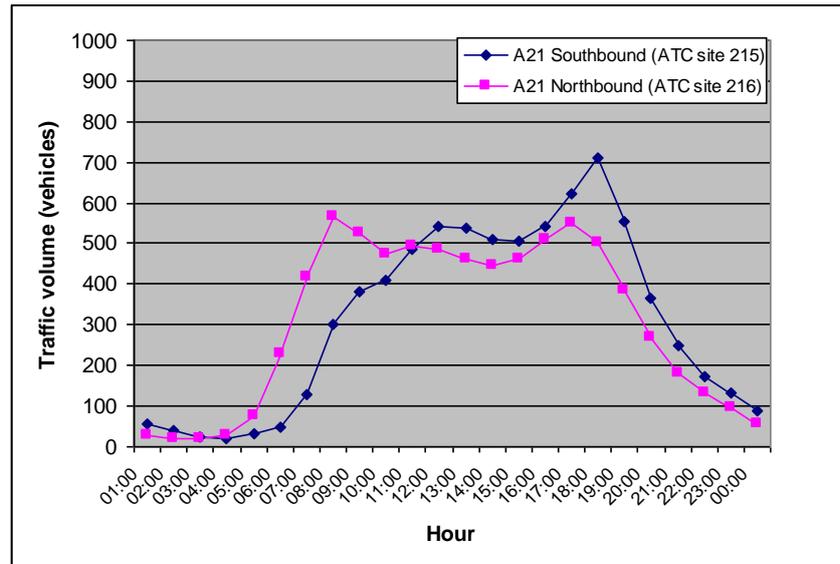
Traffic data has been summarised as annual average daily traffic (AADT) for the purposes of this NMU Context Report.

Figure 4-2 2011 AADT on A21 near Robertsbridge

Table Heading Left	Southbound	Northbound	Total
AM Peak	541	565	
PM Peak	711	551	
AADT Total	7,472	7,427	14,899

Source: TRADS2 website: Online Reporting (Period report 01/01/2011 to 31/12/2011)

Figure 4-3 2011 AADT Flow Profile on A21(T) near Robertsbridge



Source: TRADS2 website: Online Reporting (Period report 01/01/2011 to 31/12/2011)

#### 4.1.5 Accident Data

Personal Injury Accident (PIA) data has been obtained from Sussex Police. Data for the most recent five-year period has been requested and data supplied covered the period 1<sup>st</sup> November 2005 to the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

The purpose of obtaining historic accident data is to review the current road safety record in the vicinity of each of the proposed level crossing sites. The road safety record will inform the assessment of the physical extent of any necessary changes to speed limits required on the approaches to the crossings. An assessment has also been made of the potential impact of the introduction on the road safety record, either positive or negative.

According to the records of Sussex Police, there has been only one PIA recorded near the vicinity of the site, which involved a vehicle travelling southbound overtaking another vehicle near Redlands Lane.

For full details on the road safety record of the A21 at this location, refer to MM Report on A21 PIA Analysis (Doc. Ref. 313090-ITD-ITQ-004).

#### **4.2 Potential and Actual Impacts**

It is considered that the construction of a proposed full barrier-controlled level crossing in itself would not have an adverse affect on the movements of NMUs in this area.

Furthermore, it is considered that there are no immediately identifiable conflict points that would impact NMUs.

#### **4.3 Existing Assessment**

Mott MacDonald understands that there has been no previous assessment of the effects on the NMU routes as part of the proposed works.

#### **4.4 NMU Objectives**

Based on the above, the objectives of the NMU assessment are to:

- Ensure continuity of existing NMU routes where applicable;
- Maintain safety for vulnerable NMU users on the A21 and where it intersects with the existing highway network; and
- Ensure the design of the proposal is cogniscent of NMU requirements.

#### **4.5 NMU Audit**

The NMU Audit is a separate document prepared by Mott MacDonald which examines the potential impacts on non-motorised users as a result of the proposals.

Please refer to the Mott MacDonald report 'A21 Non-Motorised User Audit Report – Rother Valley Railway' (Doc. Ref. 264223FD-ITD-ITQ-126-C).

# Appendices

Appendix A. Results of NMU Surveys (Wednesday 12th November 2012 and Sunday 13th January 2013) \_\_\_\_\_ 13

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