

AbbeyRail is the St Albans Abbey line passengers' association, website <https://abbeyrail.org.uk/> in association with Hertsrail, a joined-up rail network in Hertfordshire, website <https://hertsrail.org.uk> and RailAble, researching an improved rail network, website <https://railable.com>

St Albans Local Plan Consultation 2023

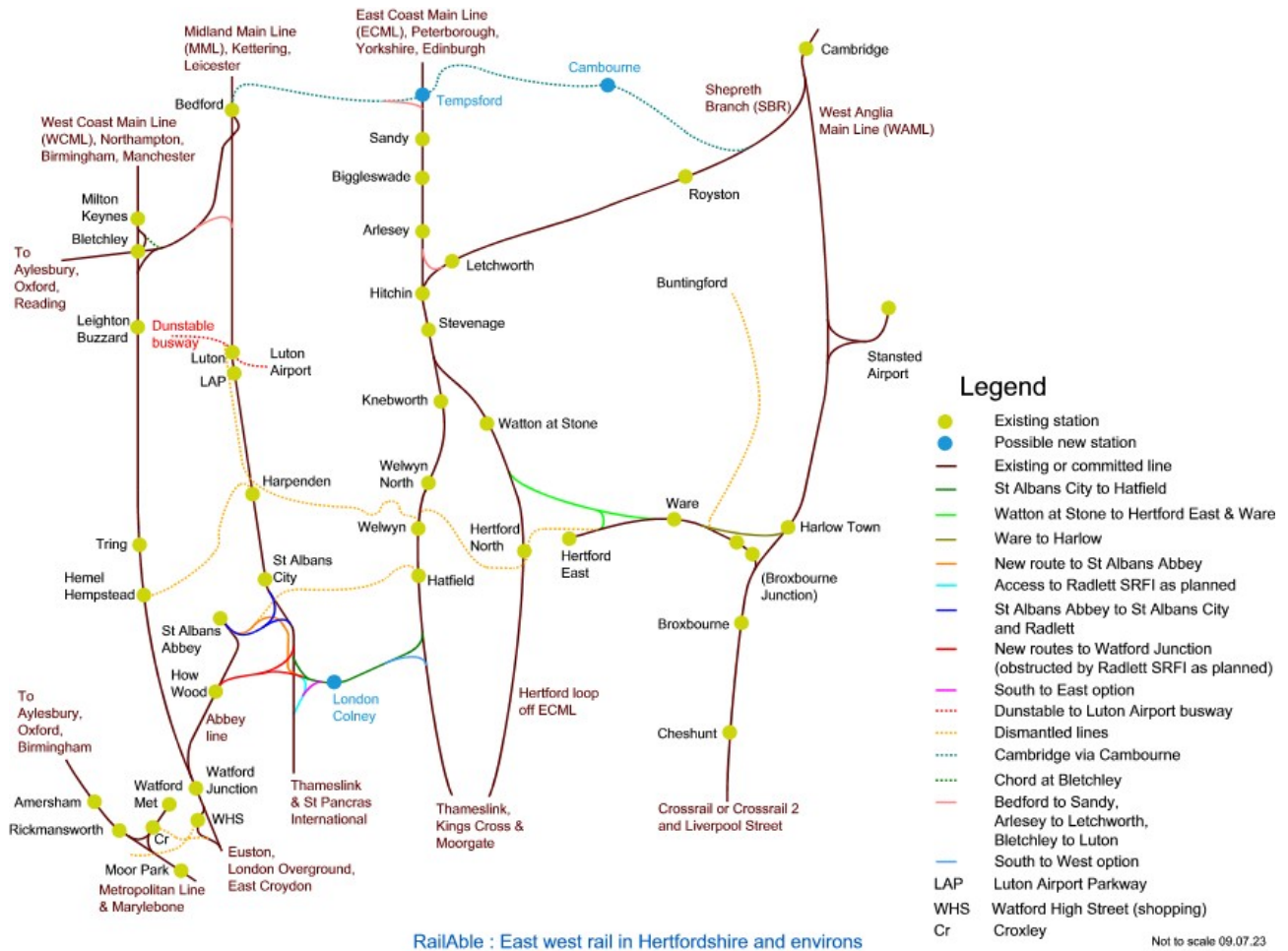
This is the AbbeyRail passengers' association response to the St Albans Local Plan Consultation 2023, together with a contribution to the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan.

Drawing 1 below illustrates the possibility of east west rail in Hertfordshire and environs. Although a Luton – Stevenage rail corridor is incorporated into Hertfordshire's rail strategy, this is improbable following conversion of the former Dunstable – Luton railway into a busway and has therefore been omitted.

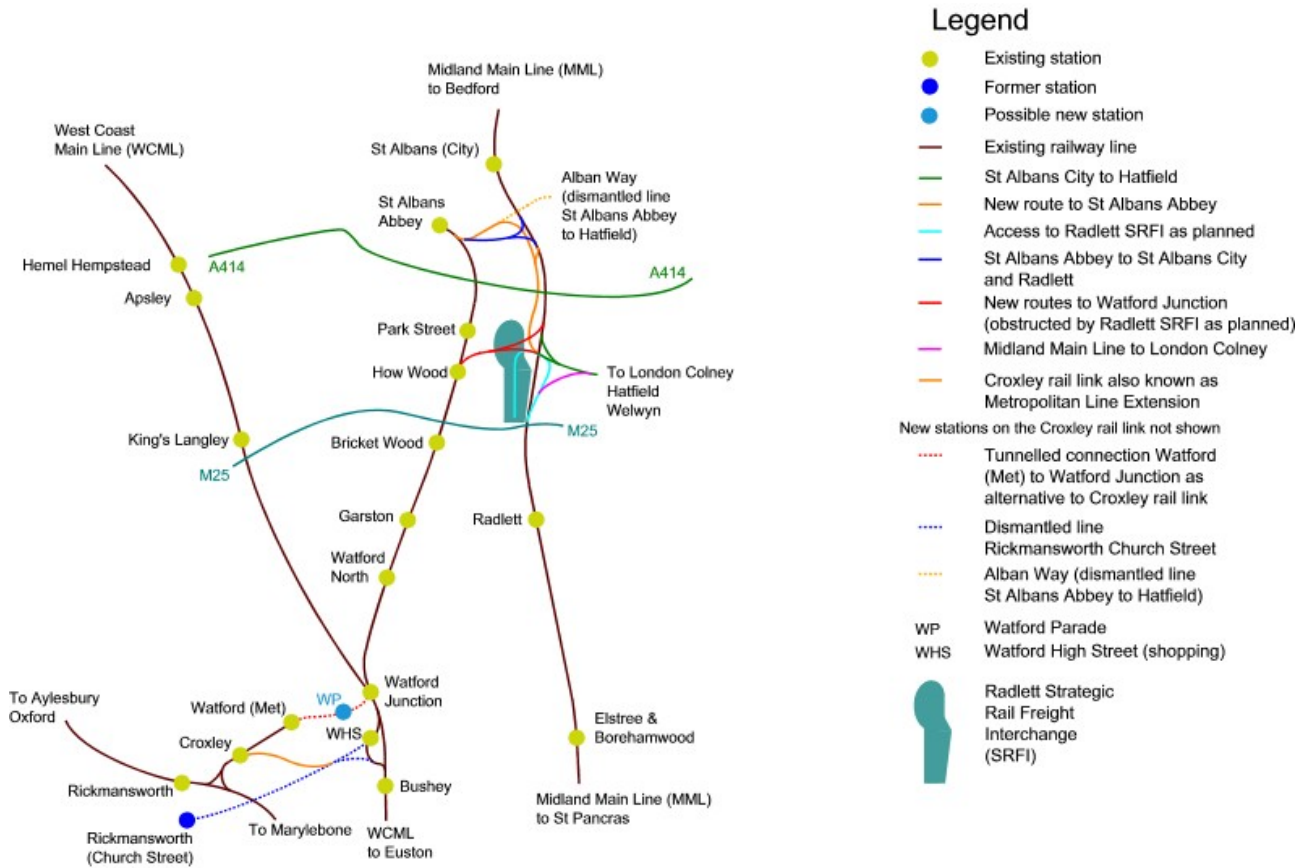
Drawing 2 below illustrates options for conventional rail in the Rickmansworth, Watford and St Albans area.

The websites listed earlier can supply further details in relation to these two drawings.

Drawing 1 : East west rail in Hertfordshire and environs



Drawing 2 : Options for conventional rail in the Rickmansworth, Watford and St Albans area



RailAble Options for conventional rail in the Rickmansworth, Watford and St Albans area

In response to the St Albans local plan, here are some possibilities for the future of the Abbey line.

AbbeyRail-SADC-1

North-westwards extension towards Hemel Hempstead and possibly to Redbourn, not illustrated earlier.

AbbeyRail-SADC-2

North-eastwards extension via Verulamium Park then northwards to the vicinity of St Albans Abbey Cathedral, not illustrated earlier.

AbbeyRail-SADC-3

Linking St Albans Abbey to St Albans City by means of a semi-circular arc, trains changing direction at St Albans Abbey.

It would have been in 2020 that we first hypothesised this in our published research (ref Oxford to Cambridge part two section "Some options for extending the Abbey line").

Possibly new site identified for Verulam Golf Course clubhouse.

AbbeyRail-SADC-4

Revelopment of Colney Fields shopping park to include a railway station for London Colney, designed as a future through route to Hatfield, linked to Watford Junction via St Albans Abbey and also with a Thameslink service.

New site identified for Verulam Golf Course clubhouse.

AbbeyRail-SADC-5

Increased car parking for access to St Albans Abbey station.

It would have been in 2020 that we first hypothesised this in our published research, with Sainsbury's car park becoming multi-storey (ref Oxford to Cambridge part two section "St Albans Abbey to Hatfield corridor").

Alternative or additional locations for access to the train service might be considered, for example between How Wood and Park Street stations.

AbbeyRail-SADC-6

Signposting of routes for walking to the Abbey station, currently lacking.

AbbeyRail-SWH-JSP-1

As part of the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan, redevelopment of Watford Junction to provide east west rail, linking the low-numbered platforms to the Abbey line. This is different from the redevelopment currently proposed.

AbbeyRail and others appreciate the support given to the Abbey line by St Albans City and District Council in previous years and very much hope this can continue.

Verulam Golf Club

AbbeyRail-SADC-4 is a proposal to extend the Abbey line to London Colney. Trains would change direction at St Albans Abbey. From St Albans Abbey the line passes beneath Cottonmill Lane making use of the trackbed of the former line from St Albans Abbey to Hatfield, then turning south before reaching Orient Close. It then crosses Verulam Golf Course to reach the vicinity of Napsbury Lane. From here the new line would continue southwards probably making use of the existing A414 bridge over the Midland Main Line which has spare capacity for one or two new tracks.

In crossing Verulam Golf Course, the new line divides that part of the golf course north of Cottonmill Lane into two sections. It is possible that the clubhouse would remain open and subject to redevelopment however it would be preferable to identify a new location for a new clubhouse. In this case there would be no requirement to cross the railway line when walking between the clubhouse and the golf course.

It is very much hoped that a suitable and pleasant new location for a new clubhouse can be identified and agreed.

Although railway lines are expensive, indeed too expensive, they do have potential to assist us in our response both to climate change and to population growth. The cooperation of all parties to identify and agree a suitable new location for a new clubhouse would be much appreciated and would also be of benefit to the community.

Response to TRA2 – Major Transport Schemes

Abbey Line enhanced service. Possibilities that have not been investigated could include partial privatisation, so as to reduce capital and operating costs, with a trial of driverless trains providing a service every 30 minutes.

Hopefully statutory protection as part of the national rail network would be retained.

Staff could be incentivised to reduce ticketless travel.

Hertfordshire Mass Rapid Transport Scheme (HERT). HERT converts the Abbey line into a guided busway. It is unprofessional junk. Our published research documents that HERT undermines the economic development of the Oxford to Cambridge regional economy.

Implications for specific sites are now listed.

Site B6 - West of London Colney, AL2 1LN, also Education Site
We would invite account to be taken of AbbeyRail-SADC-4

Site M3 - Bedmond Lane, St Albans, AL3 4AH
We would invite account to be taken of AbbeyRail-SADC-1

Site M6 - South of Harpenden Lane, Redbourn, AL3 7RQ
We would invite account to be taken of AbbeyRail-SADC-1

Site M8 - Verulam Golf Club, St Albans, AL1 1JG
Specific objection. This would obstruct AbbeyRail-SADC-3, linking St Albans Abbey to St Albans City by means of a semi-circular arc, trains changing direction at St Albans Abbey.

Site UC1 – Sainsbury's Supermarket, Everard Close, St Albans AL1 2QU
Specific objection. This would obstruct AbbeyRail-SADC-5.
We would propose a multi-storey car park providing car parking both for Sainsbury's and for the Abbey station.

Site UC41 - Garages at Grindcobbe, St Albans, AL1 2ED
In the vicinity of the Abbey line pedestrian crossing and of access to the retail area, access arrangements needing to be retained.

Inclusion in the glossary of PEA, SADC

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