

# Route Prospectus

## For the line between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey (Abbey Line)

The line between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey is one of the routes chosen for the SRA Community Rail Development pilot projects. The pilot projects were chosen to demonstrate how the Community Rail Development approach can increase revenue, manage down costs and encourage greater community involvement in the local railway.

The key measures of success of the pilots will be

- establishing the contribution of Community Rail Development in achieving locally set objectives such as reducing road congestion and increasing accessibility;
- establishing the costs for the line and services;
- establishing the effectiveness of different methods for reducing the net financial loss of Community Rail lines by increasing revenue and reducing costs where practicable.

A remit for the pilot project has been agreed by the Client Group for the pilot project. This remit forms the basis for this Route Prospectus. Like the remit, it is expected that the route prospectus will be a flexible document that will evolve (in format and substance) as the pilot project develops.

The Client Group referred to consists of Hertfordshire County Council, Silverlink Trains, Network Rail and the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA).

Designation of the line between Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey as a 'Community Rail line' is needed to progress these aspects of the remit:

- Establish the real profit and loss costs of current operating, maintaining and renewing of the Abbey Line
- Show how Train Operating Company costs might be reduced on the line by changes to regulatory arrangements, working practices and operation
- Explore opportunities for local retailers to retail tickets for the train (and integrated transport)
- Demonstrate how joint working of infrastructure owner, Train Operating Company and local community might reduce infrastructure costs, through joint planning of routine work, of work on track structures and stations, through sharing staff and through other cooperation
- Evaluate options for different types of rolling stock for the line
- Demonstrate the potential for reducing the costs of infrastructure upgrade in respect of provision of an intermediate crossing loop, to allow the introduction of a reliable service at half hourly frequency.
- Demonstrate the potential for lower cost operation of a higher frequency service
- Demonstrate the potential to use land development of St Alban's Abbey station to fund improvements to passenger facilities

Designation will also enable the pilot project to proceed, and therefore support the achievement of these objectives from the remit:

- Form a Community Rail Partnership for the line to raise the profile of the line locally and to improve its marketing and promotion.
- In conjunction with Hertfordshire CC, provide and demonstrate the impact of quality bus links at either end of the line into the town centres
- Demonstrate the scope for station adoption

Without designation the pilot project will not be able to deliver its aims and objectives. The pilot project is expected to last up to 5 years. During the time of the pilot project the designation may be reviewed and if there is a significant demand, then the consultation on designation can be repeated. This review process will enable designation to be reversed if there is significant demand once the pilot project has finished.

Community Rail Development  
Strategic Rail Authority  
55 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

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