

Railfuture Herts & Beds priorities list – January 2026 edition

All of Herts & Beds

Active

- Passenger information during disruption – seek improvement – as opportunities allow (specifically leveraging any bad experiences).
- Engineering blockades – improving notice periods. Currently on hold due to lack of time, but to be taken forward.
- Extensions of Contactless – seeking the retention of more fare choices than just peak and off-peak, most notably weekend fares. Related to this, campaigning for more Advance fares from stations on the Project Oval fare structure. *This one is an all of LSE issue (and Thames Valley and East Anglia)*. Activity planned. (Jan 2026: see main newsletter).

Most of Herts & Beds

Active

- GTR moving into GBR at the end of May. This will be largely opportunistic / and more discovery than time attempting to influence. Curious as to any potential reorganisation, given GTR's spread across of multiple Network Rail Routes.
- Lift performance, including for the low level platforms at St Pancras. This will be opportunistic activity.

East Coast Mainline

Active

- LNER Simpler Fares – This is now back as a focus area, as the end of the initial trial period is in sight. It is not the Flex fare (that's a useful addition to the portfolio), but the disappearance of the off-peak fare, and so the loss of a flexible option at a tolerable price and for must travel "some time today", the guaranteed fare is now very high. Activity planned & a priority.
- TfL bid to run GN Inners. Be proactive; see January 2026 newsletter.
- Hadley Wood Toilet opening – which is really a proxy for the principle that toilets can be open at any station when it is unstaffed. Activity planned.
- Performance on GN Inners and Outers. Still below par, so we should all continue to press for improvements as opportunities allow.
- Crowding on GN Inners when there are sporting events – lobby for longer and/or additional services – support RUGs and lobby as opportunities allow.
- Crews Hill "New Town" – up to 21,000 new homes - seeking 4 trains per hour. Be proactive.

Inactive

- December 2025 Timetable – it has been a long time coming, but for us a net benefit.
 - Plus: Our trains will stop at Cambridge South when it opens early next year. No activity planned.
 - Minus: Slower journeys between intermediate stations, particularly when a change is required (eg Hatfield / Cambridge in the evening peak)

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- LNER stops at Stevenage – From December 2025 these are pick up only travelling north and set down only going south. “Big picture” this is a rational move, and something I think we can expect more of from GBR. However, what I / we should do is complain when, due to disruption, we think there should have been a short term easement due to lack of imminent GN/TL services.
- Digswell viaduct 4 tracking (aka the viaduct just north of Welwyn Garden City) – or the partial alternative of options for one / two more tracks at Welwyn North.

West Anglia Mainline

Inactive

- Capacity improvements including 4 tracking.

Other

- Outside our patch, the ECML observation re Cambridge South ie relevant.

HERT (Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transit)

Inactive

- Just a watching task at present.

West Coast Mainline, including the Abbey Line

Active

- Performance – Still below par, so we should all continue to press for improvements as opportunities allow. Specifically, watching for decisions to not resource the Abbey line and cancel services there. I don’t really have any WMT local contacts, so this will be opportunist activity / support for RUGs.
- Recent extensions of Contactless – seeking the return of more fare choices than just peak and off-peak, most notably weekend fares. Activity planned.
- Watford Junction changes – development likely – support RUGs as needed.
- Euston station operational performance – still an intermittent issue (eg late announcement of platforms for departing trains) – monitor and respond as opportunity allows.

Inactive

- Apsley Station accessibility improvements – driven by developer activity / investment – support as opportunities occur.
- Remodelling Hemel Hempstead and/or Tring to provide extra platforms for either new service opportunities or for better service recovery after incidents.
- Crossrail extensions to Tring.

Watford

Inactive

- Link between Metropolitan line and Watford junction and other opportunities for the track bed for Croxley Green. Only activity will be reactive.

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Marston Vale line and East West Rail

Active

- For the current service, performance can be an issue, and as with the Abbey line watching for decisions to not resource the MVL and cancel services there. I don't really have any WMT local contacts, so this will be opportunist activity / support for RUGs.
- On the EWR, the main issues for us are:
 - How Universal Studios will impact the design of the new EWR services, most notably because of passenger flows for customers and, critically, workers at the site (be proactive).
 - The choice between EWR's 4 stations (& Bedford St John's) vs the current 9 (also & Bedford St John's) -See January 2026 solution – overall EWR option is the better option – but effective access to the new stations from communities near by (to current station) is essential, and should be funded within the core programme (be proactive)
 - That Bedford station gets an up fast platform on the Midland Mainline (be proactive).
 - That St Neots gets a station (mainly supporting EA Branch).
 - Retention of the current route through Bedford Midland (be proactive)
 - Working with Railfuture Thames Valley and East Anglia as appropriate (be proactive).

Midland Mainline

Active

- Thameslink performance is below par, so continue to press for improvement as opportunities arise (including creating those opportunities. For EMR performance, it is a watching brief only at present.
- Wixams – seeking for the new design also suitable for Universal traffic to be delivered as early as possible. One to be proactive on.
 - Consider options for a turn back a la St Albans (mainly because of likely regular closures of Bedford for EWR construction
- Radlett, Leagrave & Flitwick – support intentions for lifts as opportunity allows / is created (in the case of Flitwick, moving from commitment to delivery).
- Luton (Town) – Support the substantial improvement to this station, including lifts as opportunity allows / is created.