



HERTFORDSHIRE | ESSEX RAPID TRANSIT

HERT Our transport system **re-imagined**

A CLEANER, GREENER, HEALTHIER FUTURE



Public Engagement, **Autumn 2021**

Introducing the Hertfordshire to Essex Rapid Transit

Our transport system re-imagined

Creating a sustainable transport network across Hertfordshire and connecting into west Essex is central to our vision to create a cleaner, greener, healthier Hertfordshire, where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential in thriving communities and the environment is protected for the future.

Currently passenger transport journeys across the east-west A414 corridor take twice as long as the private car, with 76% of journeys along the corridor being taken by car. We cannot address the challenges of today and the long-term by building more roads for private vehicles. To tackle traffic congestion and reduce carbon emissions, we need a well-connected public transport system that uses clean energy.

Our proposed way of re-imagining our passenger transport network is through the Hertfordshire to Essex Rapid Transit (HERT). This is one of the biggest opportunities to support our economic growth, improve the environment, and positively impact our existing and new communities.

The HERT vision

The HERT will deliver a step-change in our passenger transport network through an accessible, reliable and affordable east-west transit system, connecting people to where they live, work and visit. The HERT will run from Watford and Hemel Hempstead in the west to Harlow (Essex) in the east.

It will connect with north-south rail lines to create new sustainable journey options across the whole of Hertfordshire and beyond.

Half of all journeys from the main settlements along the A414 corridor are under 10km and can be done by walking or cycling. Investment in the HERT will provide a new transport system that helps create better links with bus services, walking and cycling routes, making it a real alternative to using the car for local journeys.



Proposed HERT pulling up at stop in front of Hatfield Station

What are the **benefits for Hertfordshire and the East of England?**



→ **Jobs and economic growth**

Hertfordshire faces unprecedented growth over the next decade. With more than 100,000 new homes and 100,000 new jobs planned across the county over the next 15 years to meet our needs, the HERT will sustainably support this growth.

The HERT will improve connectivity between communities, key developments and major employment centres, opening up new job opportunities and linking our businesses to skilled people across the county and wider region. This will also help to attract new investment into the county.

→ **Improving our environment**

We need to significantly reduce our carbon emissions to meet our 2050 net-zero carbon target and the HERT will help support the county's commitment to tackling climate change.

By offering convenient and reliable passenger transport services, and re-shaping transport networks to provide seamless journeys across all forms of mobility, the HERT will help transform travel behaviour, increasing journeys made by passenger transport and shifting people away from cars. This will help to improve air quality and reduce traffic noise to improve quality of life for Hertfordshire residents.

→ **Supporting the community**

Improving the experience of public transport and creating high-quality, safer links to walking and cycling routes will help improve the health of our communities, while enabling people to access a wider range of healthcare, leisure, education, and employment facilities.

Delivering an accessible transport system, which is affordable, fit for all ages and caters for a wide range of abilities and our diverse communities, is vital for the future of our county.

What is the proposed route?

The HERT corridor will be split into three sections:

→ **Hemel Hempstead – Gilston:** this is the main east-west section that will serve the main settlements between Hemel Hempstead and the new Gilston Garden Town. It will also improve connections to Luton Airport via interchange in St Albans.

→ **St Albans – Watford:** this north-south section will operate between St Albans and Watford. This corridor is currently served by the Abbey Line with potential for onward connections to west Watford.

→ **Gilston – Harlow (and onwards to Stansted Airport):** this section will provide links from Gilston Garden Town and into Harlow, providing improved onward connections to Stansted airport via the new bus interchange at Harlow town centre.

It is likely that these sections will be delivered in phases as funding becomes available and in line with planned development.

What type of vehicle will it be?

The details around how the HERT will operate, the exact route it will take, and the type of vehicles it will use will be explored through detailed technical studies and further public engagement at a later stage. Hertfordshire County Council and Essex County Council will work closely to ensure that rapid and seamless journeys can be made across the entire rapid transit network.

Our vision is for a zero-emission vehicle with a modern, comfortable and spacious design that is easy and accessible for all passengers to use.

How will this be funded?

A project of this scale will take some years to develop and needs substantial investment from government, together with private sector partners. We are creating a strategic outline business case for the project to submit in spring 2022, which will aim to secure funding to develop the project further.

What are the next steps?

The first phase of public engagement will take place this autumn, focusing on the plans within Hertfordshire and the aim to link into west Essex. A virtual exhibition room will be available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/HERT from **18 November 2021 to 28 January 2022** where you can find out more about the scheme, as well as register to join one of the online exhibition events and complete the online survey.