

## News from Other Guided Bus Schemes

Not many Cambridgeshire residents have ever seen a guided bus. So here are some experiences from other schemes.

The **Crawley** system suffers from bus guidewheels snapping off as buses steer into the start of the guideway. This is highly dangerous—the bus then bounces between the guideway walls while it is accelerating hard. This is likely to be much more of a problem in Cambridgeshire, where buses would approach the guideway at a sharp turn and there would be 20 breaks in the guideway for drivers to negotiate.

Riders say the guideway in **Leeds** is less comfortable than ordinary roads—at about 30mph buses start to oscillate unpleasantly.

The guideway in **Adelaide**, the only comparable rural guideway ever built, suffers from rear-end collisions in fog. And Adelaide does not have much fog, whereas in Cambridgeshire the fog is both frequent and very patchy. Unlike trains, guided buses have no signals to protect against collision with a stationary bus ahead. Unlike ordinary buses, guided buses cannot take avoiding action if the driver spots a stationary bus ahead.

The guideway in **Essen** has to close every time it snows. Our Council says there is no need—they would send out men with shovels. On a 12 mile long guideway?

The guideway in **Ipswich** had to be completely rebuilt when a new set of buses were needed—the Council was unable to buy replacement buses that were the right width for the guideway.

Plans to build a guideway in **Chester** were abandoned in 2002, even after receiving TWA planning consent from the government. The reason? There was a change of administration at County Hall and Councillors found out the real costs were much higher than estimated.

Bedfordshire County Council has just voted to halt plans for a guideway from **Luton to Dunstable**, days after their public consultation period ended. The reason? The government 'grant' involved 50% of the funds being borrowed by the Council. The finance costs would have meant a sharp rise in bus fares. Cambridgeshire's £65 million 'grant' involves 50% borrowing too. The Council has not included finance costs in its calculations.

## What does the County Council know about transport?

The Council insists that all of its guided bus plans have been drawn up by experts and audited by independent consultants. Here are just some of the Council's more obvious mistakes.

The Council has published journey times along the guideway. To meet these times, the Council says it expects buses to accelerate at 4.83m/s<sup>2</sup>. That's the same as 0 to 60mph in 5.5 seconds, or as fast as a Ferrari! And the Council's braking speed? 60-0 in 2.7 seconds. Almost like hitting a brick wall. These figures got through the audit!

The Council's application for central government funding gave the cost of a new guided bus bridge under Hills Road as £2.5 million. Two weeks after funding was announced, the Council said the true cost was actually £10 million. Why the increase? None of its experts had noticed that all the cabling from Cambridge railway signal box was in the way of this bridge.

The same funding application said that Over Windmill Bridge needed only minor modifications. Now the Council says it must be demolished and rebuilt. The problem? It's too low and too narrow for the guideway.

The Council has also lowered its proposed guided bus service frequencies after getting government funding. The funding application showed a service frequency to St Ives of 6 buses an hour, 18 hours a day. Having got funding approval, the Council has reduced the proposed off-peak service to 3 buses an hour. Since commercial operators already run 5 buses an hour to St Ives via the A14, the Council has clearly lost confidence in the number of guided bus passengers.

The Council has shown its ignorance of rail as well as bus systems. Shona Johnstone, the Council's Cabinet Member responsible for Transport, alleged that the CAST.IRON preferred route to Huntingdon was impossible because of "a gradient that a train couldn't manage". Hasn't she heard of embankments or cuttings? The steepest gradient in CAST.IRON's plans is 1:100—not as steep as either of the rail routes from London to Cambridge.

# CAST.IRON INFORMATION SHEET

## Railway or Guided Bus? Have Your Say Now!

### The Soaring Cost of Guided Bus

Cambridgeshire County Council wants to spend £101 million on a guided bus system. It claims this is a high quality transport option that will entice people out of their cars.

### Guided Buses Would Be Slow!

The 'guided' buses would not be guided through Cambridge, St Ives or Huntingdon—they would have to fight through the congested streets with all other traffic.



A guided bus would take 26 minutes from Addenbrookes to the Science Park—just the same as buses do today.

Even journeys along the guideway would be slow—buses run from Drummer St to St Ives faster today than a guided bus would do.

### Guided Bus: Expensive White Elephant

The guided buses would not only be slower than today's conventional buses. The Council says they would also be more expensive to ride on!

Over 60% of passengers that the Council claim would ride on a guided bus can make the same journey today on an existing bus route.

For most passengers, the guided bus would be a slower, dearer option. So that means:

- far fewer passengers would use the guided buses than the Council says;
- Council Tax bills would rise to meet the costs of this white elephant.

### Improve Existing Bus Services Instead!

The Council's own studies show that new express bus services along an upgraded A14 (now given the go-ahead) would

- remove just as many cars from the A14 as the guided bus scheme;
- Be nearly £100 million cheaper.

### Rail—the Lower Cost Alternative

Costings from rail industry experts show a railway can be built:

- from Cambridge to St Ives for £30 million, in time for the Northstowe development;
- from Cambridge to Huntingdon for £50 million;

including land purchase and the same Park and Ride facilities as the guided bus.

That's half the price of the guided bus!

### Rail will make a real difference

Rail will get passengers through Cambridge without running a single extra bus into the city centre. Council figures show:

- fewer than half of potential guided bus passengers want to go to the city centre;
- nearly all of these are served by existing bus routes anyway.

Only rail can cater for cross-city journeys—Cambridge Station to the Science Park in 5 minutes. Compare that with 20 minutes by guided bus.

### Rail—the only strategic solution for the A14

The guided bus is designed only for local journeys. It would remove as little as 2% of traffic from the A14.

Since the guided bus was proposed, expansion at Stansted has been announced. Stansted expansion means:

- more people will use Stansted than use Heathrow today;
- over 120,000 extra passengers travelling to Stansted every day;
- improved rail services will be essential to avoid severe traffic build-up on the A14.

Building a guided busway on the old St Ives railway line would destroy the only strategic transport option Cambridgeshire has for relieving the A14.



### Rail encourages cycling

Government figures say a rail system will attract large numbers of cyclists. All Cambridge-Huntingdon trains will include cycle racking and carry bicycles free.

By carrying bicycles, rail reaches out to commuters further away from its stations than a guided bus could from its bus stops.

Guided buses would not carry bicycles.

## Support the Cambridge to Huntingdon Railway. Join CAST.IRON Now!

Complete the application form at [www.castiron.org.uk](http://www.castiron.org.uk) or send this form to:

Name.....	Subscription Rates:
Business/Organisation.....	[ ] Individual £10
.....	[ ] Household £20
Address.....	[ ] Pensioners, Unwaged £5
.....	[ ] Corporate £40
Postcode.....	[ ] Non-corporate £30
Telephone.....	<i>Parish Councils, environmental groups etc</i>
E-mail.....	Donation £.....
What skills, experience or professional input can you provide?	Cheque enclosed £.....
.....	<i>Cheques payable to CAST.IRON</i>
.....	

### CAST.IRON

St Francis House  
10 Newmarket Road  
Cambridge  
CB5 8DT

This form will fit in a standard window envelope. A photocopy is acceptable.

## Have your say!

The Council has applied for a Transport and Works Act Order (the equivalent of planning permission) to build the guided bus system and to make compulsory purchases of land. The public now has 42 days to say what it thinks.

The Council has only applied for permission to build the out-of-town bus guideways—the expensive part of its scheme, costing £95 million.

Council transport officials do not intend to reveal details of bus routes or priority measures in Cambridge city until after they have got permission for the out-of-town guideways.

Many of the worst defects in the 'guided' bus scheme concern problems with the ordinary road sections. The Council should be made to resubmit their application with full details of all compulsory purchase, priority measures and bus stops for the entire route.

**If you wish to object** to the Guided Bus scheme, you must send your objection in writing to: Secretary of State for Transport, Department for Transport, TWA Orders Unit, Zone 3/11, Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DR.

Your objection must include your name and address and arrive by 2 April 2004.

### Your voice counts!

CAST.IRON believes the Council should promote both improved bus services and improved rail services.

- buses should run on the roads
- the old railway line should be used for rail services.

A combination of express buses and new rail services is the best way to solve local transport problems. And it requires much less taxpayers' money.



## Guided Bus—the Slow Transport Option

Cambridgeshire County Council wants to spend £95 million of public money laying a concrete guideway along disused railway lines into Cambridge. The Council hopes that local bus operators would then pay access charges to run bus services along the guideway.

Buses that use the guideway would be standard buses, except that they would have 'guide wheels' on their front axles. For much of their journey time they would run as standard buses on ordinary roads, not on a guideway at all. A bus from Cambridge to Huntingdon would use the guideway only between the Science Park and St Ives. From Cambridge City Centre to the Science Park and from St Ives to Huntingdon it would share the same congested roads with other road traffic.

For 2007, Council service plans show 2 buses an hour running from Addenbrookes to Cambridge and 3 per hour from Cambridge to St Ives. So this is how a guided bus service would compare with today's bus services.

Route	Current Bus Services		2007 Guided Bus	
	Frequency	Journey time	Frequency	Journey time
Cambridge (Drummer St) to St Ives	5 per hour	30 minutes	3 per hour	33 minutes
Cambridge to Huntingdon	5 per hour	51 minutes	3 per hour	54 minutes
Cambridge to Fenstanton	2 per hour	25 minutes	1 per hour	44 minutes
Addenbrookes to Science Park	6 per hour	26 minutes	2 per hour	26 minutes

(Timings along the guideway are from published Council estimates; timings along public roads are from current bus timetables.)

This table shows that running buses along a rural concrete guideway would make no improvement to your journey time. Bus guideways through congested town and city centres might reduce journey times, but the Council does not plan to build any of these, because there is no room for them!

The Council hopes to reduce journey times by introducing bus priority measures where the 'guided' buses have to share ordinary roads. Of course such priority measures would speed up all buses using those roads, not just buses coming off the guideway. So why not simply introduce these priority measures? — it would produce just as good a result for the passenger, at a saving of £95 million.

What about all the other possible guided bus routes? One benefit claimed for the guided bus is that it can leave the guideway part way along and run into local villages. For example CHUMMS suggested a feeder route from Fenstanton. As the table shows, guided buses on this route would be 19 minutes slower than current bus services!



Even the claim of 26 minutes from Addenbrookes to the Science Park is highly dubious. The Council says it will run double deckers from Drummer St to Huntingdon (every 20 minutes) but only single deckers from Addenbrookes to Drummer St (every 30 minutes). So passengers will have to wait and change at Drummer St.

## Guided Bus—costs out of control

The Council told government its guided bus scheme would cost £74 million. Every month the cost has gone up, now as far as £101 million. The Council has hidden £15 million of guided bus costs in other budgets, to make the total look smaller.

The Council says it now needs an extra £10 million in contributions from developers, to help meet the extra costs—£10 million that should have gone on building schools.

The Council has said it can give a full breakdown of the guided bus costs to anyone who asks for them. Many people have asked. All have been refused.

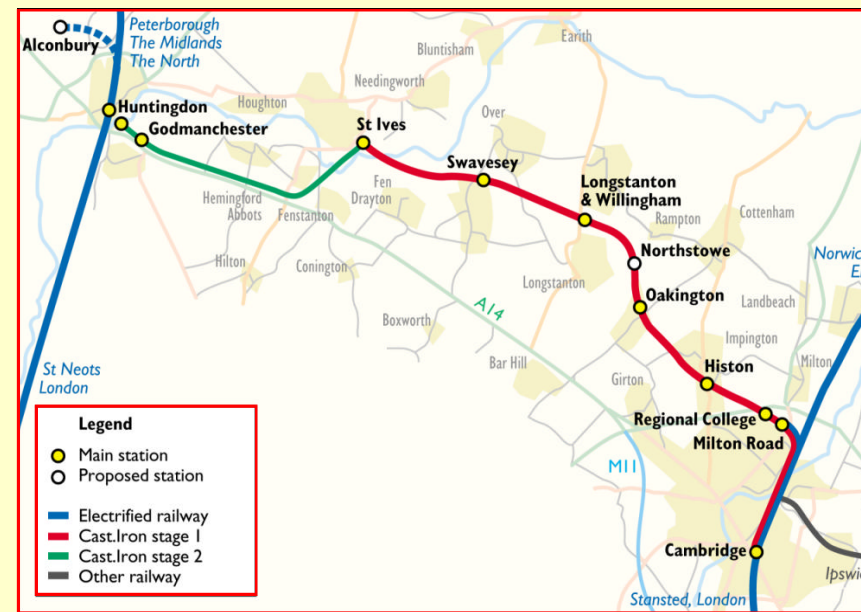
## Guided Bus—bad for the Environment

The guided system comes out a poor second to rail on environmental grounds.

Throughout the life of the system, there would be emissions from buses as they move slowly through City congestion.

Then there are over 70 acres of concrete track. The guided bus would need much more agricultural land than rail because of the access track that has to run alongside it. Even more agricultural land still would be taken away for flood prevention, because of all those acres of land the Council would be concreting over.

## The CAST.IRON Rail System



CAST.IRON has costed out full plans to construct and operate a commuter railway from Cambridge to Huntingdon, in two major stages:

### Stage 1: Cambridge - St Ives

Stage 1 will see reintroduction of a rail service along the former Cambridge to St Ives railway line. Track is still in place along 87% of the route.

CAST.IRON will run trains from St Ives to the Science Park and through to central Cambridge. The rail link from central Cambridge to the Science Park will be electrified, allowing trains from London to serve the Science Park directly.

The total costs for Stage 1 are £30 million. For this, CAST.IRON will build a modern commuter railway with 70mph running speeds on completely new track, fully automated road crossings and new station platforms. The costs include land purchase and the same Park and Ride facilities as in the guided bus plans.

Figures from Cambridgeshire County Council put demand for the Stage 1 railway system at 7,000 passengers per day—twice the level required to run the railway economically for 18 hours a day.

These Council figures do not include cyclists. The CHUMMS study showed that a rail system would generate an additional 28% passengers by accommodating cyclists. CAST.IRON's trains have been specially designed to carry a large number of bicycles—this will also significantly reduce the amount of parking space needed along the line.

### Stage 2: Cambridge - Huntingdon

Stage 2 will see the CAST.IRON system extended to Huntingdon. Of multiple possible route options to Huntingdon,

CAST.IRON recommends using a carriageway from the current A14, once the upgraded A14 has been built.

This means that 91% of the CAST.IRON route will run along land already designated for transport use.

The total additional costs for Stage 2 are £20 million. Figures from the County Council and the CHUMMS study put the expected use at 12,000 passengers per day—3 times the level required to run the railway economically for 18 hours a day.

### Timescales

Construction of the Stage 1 system can be carried out in 18 months. Half way through this period, CAST.IRON would introduce a pilot service from Swavesey to the Science Park.

The timescale for Stage 2 depends on the exact route chosen and on when the new A14 section is completed. After that, construction will take 12 months.

The Stage 1 system is financially self-sustaining. It will make a significant contribution to reduction in car use while Stage 2 is planned and constructed. It will provide a quality transport service to meet the new demands from Northstowe.

### Alconbury and Stansted

The completion of Stage 2 will see a high quality rapid transport system serving destinations from Cambridge to Huntingdon. The final goal is then a link onto the main line at Huntingdon, integrating the CAST.IRON route into the national rail network.

This link will complete the strategic transport infrastructure that Cambridgeshire needs—an additional rail link from the East Coast to Alconbury and a solution to the increasing traffic flows from Stansted.

## CHUMMS—A Flawed Study

The Council relies on the CHUMMS study for its repeated claims that rail is an expensive option. Yet the CHUMMS rail assessment was flawed from start to finish.

CHUMMS first stated that it was not possible to run a railway along the A14 corridor from St Ives to Huntingdon—even though it recommended this corridor should be used for a new public transport system. This corridor would have been the ideal route to serve commuters; CAST.IRON's engineering studies have shown that such a rail route is perfectly possible.

Ignoring the best rail route completely, CHUMMS instead studied a different route to Huntingdon. 38% of the Cambridge-St Ives trackbed—by far the most cost-effective place to run a new rail link—was left out. The CHUMMS route was significantly longer than CAST.IRON's route. 51% of the route, or 19km, would have been on green field sites—compared to just 9% as recommended by CAST.IRON. The CHUMMS route even bypassed St Ives completely!

The CHUMMS rail route avoided key population centres—so CHUMMS said rail would not attract many passengers.

The CHUMMS rail route made heavy use of green field sites—so CHUMMS said rail would be less environmentally friendly.

The CHUMMS rail route failed to use much of the former trackbed—so CHUMMS said rail would be too expensive.

CHUMMS then predicted that many more people would use a guided bus than rail. But 5,000 of the passengers they counted for guided bus were simply passengers they predicted would transfer from existing A14 bus services. In fact, even according to CHUMMS, the number of *new* users for public transport would be practically the same for guided bus and rail.

CHUMMS predicted the construction cost for the guided bus at £40 million. So far the total project cost revealed by the Council is £101 million—still only an estimate!

CHUMMS gave the construction cost for its contrived rail route as £109M, whereas the cost for CAST.IRON's rail route is £50M.

## No Operators for Guided Buses

The Council says it cannot say how many buses would run along its guideways—this would be a commercial decision by local bus operators.

Not a single bus operator has made a commitment to run services. Each operator would have to buy buses that are more expensive than their normal fleet. They would then have to charge the public higher fares for journeys that are slower. No wonder no operator has signed up.

## Why is Rail So Much Less Expensive?

The main reason is that there is already a railway trackbed along most of the route. It was used as a double track railway for more than 140 years; the civil engineering works are still in place along over half of the route. Experts from the railway construction industry have surveyed the trackbed; it is in good condition for laying new, high speed track.

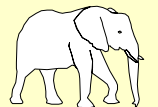
Civil engineering and construction costs for an environmentally unfriendly concrete busway would be much higher.

The railway trackbed is, of course, the right width for a railway! A guided bus system needs a much wider track. That means demolishing and rebuilding the road bridge in Over and building wider bridges over tens of rivers, streams and culverts. It means buying up lots of agricultural land and laying concrete tracks on it.

The concrete tracks of the guided bus system are also a flood hazard—so the Council would have to buy up more land and dig out large ponds.

The Council wants to close all vehicle tracks that currently cross the guideway route. That means buying up yet more rural land, to build new access roads. This is to avoid breaks in the guideway—where buses would have to slow down to 15mph!

**Why is rail so much less expensive? Because it will fit into the existing trackbed without all of these problems!**



## Addenbrookes Guideway—the Biggest White Elephant of All

One of the most expensive sections of the guided busway is the southern section to Addenbrookes. The Council says that since Addenbrookes is the area's largest employer, this is a vital part of the scheme.

How many staff does Addenbrookes employ? Over 5,500. How many passengers does the Council say would travel to Addenbrookes by guided bus in the peak hour? Just 103.

Hardly a ringing endorsement of the Council's 'high quality transport option'. 103 passengers would not make a difference to Cambridge's traffic problems. Their half-hourly bus service does not justify the £30 million this part of the scheme would cost.

The Council already runs buses from the City centre to Addenbrookes every 10 minutes. If a new high quality southern transport route is needed, by far the most cost-effective solution is to build a new rail spur down the old Bedford trackbed and run trains down it.