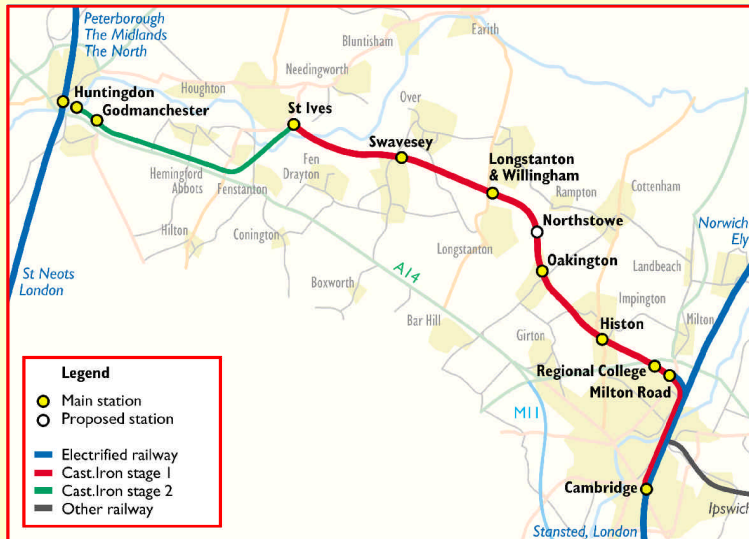


CAST.IRON INFORMATION SHEET

Railway or Guided Bus?



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 to 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 construction costs for Stage 1 are £18M. For this sum, CAST.IRON will build a modern commuter railway with 70mph running speeds on completely new track, fully automated road crossings and new, high specification station platforms.

The operating costs for Stage 1 can be met, without subsidy, by 1,900 passengers using the system per day, paying standard railway fares. This is readily achievable. In 1994, Cambridgeshire County Council proposed to implement the Stage 1 railway system. It gave the expected use as 3,500 passengers per day. The new town at Northstowe will add 1,000 more passengers to this number.

CAST.IRON's trains have been specially designed to carry a large number of bicycles. The recent CHUMMS study showed that 22% of users of a rail system would be cyclists, so that this feature of the CAST.IRON system will significantly reduce the amount of parking space needed along the line.

Stage 2: Cambridge to 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 proposed new A14 section has been built. This means that 91% of the CAST.IRON route will run along land already designated for transport use.

The additional construction costs for Stage 2 are £12M. The total operating costs for Stage 2 can be met, without subsidy, by 2,100 passengers using the system per day, paying standard railway fares. This is readily achievable. The CHUMMS study gave the expected use of a rail system as 10,000 passengers per day.

Timescales

Construction of the Stage 1 system can be carried out in 18 months. Half way through the construction period, CAST.IRON will introduce a pilot service along part of the Stage 1 route, from Swavesey as far as the Science Park.

The timescale for Stage 2 depends on the exact route chosen and also 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 during the time Stage 2 is being planned and constructed. It will provide a quality transport service ready to meet the new demands from Northstowe.

Huntingdon and Alconbury

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 transport infrastructure and providing access to the Alconbury freight facility.

Would a Guided Bus Be Any Use To Me?

Cambridgeshire County Council wants to spend over £40M of public money laying a concrete guideway along disused railway lines into Cambridge. The Council hopes that local bus operators will then pay extra access charges to run buses along the guideway.

Buses that use the guideway will have to be modified by fitting small 'guide wheels'. In all other respects they will be standard buses. This is important because much of their journey time will be on ordinary roads, not on a guideway. For example, a bus from Cambridge to Huntingdon will use the guideway only from the Science Park to St Ives. All the way from Cambridge City Centre to the Science Park and from St Ives to Huntingdon it will share the same congested roads with other road traffic.

By 2007, Council service plans show 6 buses an hour running from Cambridge towards St Ives along the guideway. Some of these buses would leave the guideway before St Ives and run into nearby villages. 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 – 6 per hour	30 minutes	4 per hour	33 minutes
Cambridge to Huntingdon	5 – 6 per hour	51 minutes	4 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

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

Running buses along a rural concrete guideway will make no real 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 type of guideway.

The Council hopes to reduce bus journey times by introducing bus priority measures where the 'guided' buses have to share ordinary roads, although these measures are not included in the £40M. Of course such priority measures would speed up all buses using those roads, not just buses coming off the guideway. So why not simply implement these priority measures, improving Cambridgeshire's bus services just as much while scrapping the £40M concrete guideways?

Why is a Guided Bus System So Expensive?

CAST.IRON can construct a railway from Cambridge to St Ives for £18M, including design costs and contingencies. Constructing a guided bus system over the same route would cost more than £40M. Why the difference?

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

In contrast, the civil engineering and construction costs to lay the environmentally unfriendly concrete track required for a bus guideway are much higher.

Cambridgeshire County Council appears to believe, incorrectly, that a railway would be more expensive than a guided bus. It has told Central Government that a railway from Cambridge to Huntingdon would cost £109M, not £30M as CAST.IRON says. Why the difference? The railway costed at £109M would have run along a very different, longer route. 51% of the route, or 19km, would have been on green field sites. The route did not even go to St Ives and failed to make use of 38% of the former trackbed. Little wonder the Council said it was more expensive.

The Council has not always held this view. In 1994 it recommended reinstating the railway along the same route to St Ives that CAST.IRON recommends. At that time the Council published much lower costings, supporting CAST.IRON's case.

Like for Like?

All the costs above are for construction of transport infrastructure, compared like for like. A rail or a guided bus scheme would both be accompanied by Park and Ride facilities along the route. These would cost much the same in both cases, except that the cycle journeys attracted by the railway scheme would reduce the need for parking along the route.

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

Complete the application form at

www.castiron.org.uk

or send this form to

CAST.IRON

St Francis House
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