

# Guided Bus, Public Meeting, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2002, Histon Junior School

The Cambridge Evening News said:

## **Accept guided bus or get nothing, public told**

Accept the guided bus or you will get nothing - that was the stark warning from transport chiefs at a public meeting last night.

Around 200 concerned members of the public quizzed Cambridgeshire County Council over the controversial scheme at the meeting at Histon Junior School.

Council representatives said the time for arguing over possible rail links was over and called on people to accept the scheme.

Brian Smith, director of environment and transport for the county, said: "The decision has been made by Government and the bottom line is we will only get money from the Government if it is for a guided bus.

"The Government holds all the cards in terms of how decisions on big transport issues are made. We have to realise that, because if we want to fight it and say we don't like the scheme, then nothing will happen at all."

The scheme, which involves using the former Cambridge - St Ives rail line as a route for rapid transit buses, extended into Cambridge itself, has been backed by the county council. The council has asked the Government for the money to pay for it, which could top £70 million.

No decision has been made yet on who might run the buses, but a consortium of companies under the title superCAM is keen to do so.

Many people at the meeting were concerned at what effect it would have on houses and gardens next to the proposed route and some jeered when officers said they could not go into details of the proposals. Others had concerns about the affect the buses would have on the roads in Histon, how they would cut down on freight on the A14 and how they would help alleviate traffic in Cambridge City.

Peter Murgatroyd from Impington said: "The problem with the proposals is that they focus on the city centre. The underlying assumption is that anybody coming into Cambridge off the A14 wants to go to the city centre. What do the proposals contribute to the people who want to go across the city?"

Chair - Ray Wynn - standing in for Max Parish who was called away on urgent business.

County Councillor Shona Johnstone - Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

Brian Smith, Director of Environment and Transport; Stephen Jolly, Integrated Transport Manager.

About 120 members of the public, and Councillors, including Phil Gooden, Neil Davies, and Councillors from both Parish Councils.

BBC Radio Cambridgeshire and, possibly, reporter from Look East using hand held camera.

The presentation was in three parts - past, present and future, with questions after each.

Brian Smith started by pointing out that the meeting may be a bit premature, in that questions on detail they don't have answers for at the moment. Nevertheless it was a valuable meeting, and the County were expecting feedback which will help on consultation.

Brian Smith then started his presentation by looking at past history. This included local pressure through 90's to do something about A14, which lead to CHUMMS, the first of the multi-modal studies. CHUMMS accepted by Secretary of State in December 2001. Smith noted that, since

CHUMMS was first of multi-modal studies, and first on guided bus, civil servants not entirely clear on how to take everything forward - learning exercise for all, and benefits from being first.

Key points at this point were focus on Government control of process. Guided bus decision made by Government, we'll only get money for guided bus (or nothing at all). Government holds all of the cards. There was some comment on the archaic attitude of Government (all Governments), and under investment in transport.

Cambridgeshire County Council agree with conclusions re guided bus.

Shona Johnstone added that what to do with the St Ives line has been an on-going debate for years. The decision is now taken, and it is now up to the County, as the Highways Authority, to make guided bus work.

Questions:

Chris Carey, Impington - Can't deliver a decent bus service now, how come in the future; and what about lorry traffic on A14?	<p>Shona Johnstone - CHUMMS is in 3 parts - and the third element (upgrade to Nuneaton - Felixstowe rail link) is vitally important.</p> <p>Brian Smith - first to admit that we don't have a perfect bus service, but that elsewhere has seen improvements. This "corner" hasn't. But Stagecoach is a commercial service and all County can do is press for improvements. But, we still need to do something on A14.</p>
Melanie Bell, Histon - what about stop in the village?	<p>Brian Smith - There <b>will</b> be a stop in Histon.</p> <p>Question arising: the Cabinet paper presented towards the end of July did <b>not</b> include a stop in Impington (even if it is now called Histon Bus Stop). Why the rapid change of policy in Appendix 10, issued at the end of July, particularly when Histon and Impington are so close to the end of the guideway?</p>
Ivan Ivanovich - CPRE - what about the 4 <sup>th</sup> component of the CHUMMS recommendations, demand management?	Shona Johnstone - County Council is implementing demand management, but by physical (restricted areas - bollards, bus lanes etc) rather than fiscal (money). However County Council is part of a Government "charging partnership" and is still investigating this area. There are no plans today for fiscal demand management.
Histon residents - What about potential for land loss? What about noise?	<p>Shona Johnstone - Land is a question of detail, don't know answer. The bid for funding is about principles. As to noise, clearly there will be noise compared with a disused rail line.</p> <p>Will give answers over next few months.</p>
David Burn, Histon - A14 - trans-european road. What happens with local cars taken off it? Cars -off - lorries on?	Brian Smith - Government would like to get lorries off. A14 will continue to be a busy road. Guided Bus provides an alternative.
Impington - Will it be diesel? Fuff Munnelly - What happens to existing traffic on roads?	<p>Brian Smith - detail</p> <p>Question arising: Appendix 10 clearly identifies that diesels are planned, since there is a forecast increase in PM10's. Why was this not explained at the meeting?</p>

	Crossovers are standard traffic light controls.
Bus every 86 seconds - what about traffic? Station Stores. Bedroom next to level crossing - traffic in the morning queuing to level crossing (from Cambridge Road lights) - how will it work	
John Henderson, Eltisley, St Neots - Heavy rails - other schemes elsewhere in the Country - why not here?	Shona Johnstone - Light rail works with 400k - 500k people generating load through the day. CHUMMS has a role for rail, but its not public transport now. Time for debate is past - ended with Secretary of State decision last December.
Peter Murgatroyd, Impington - question as reported by CEN.	

Brian Smith continued by covering the Annex E submission. Government challenged County to do 12-18 months of work in 6 months - to demonstrate viability of scheme. Work done by Atkins (retained consultants) calling on their expertise from across the country.

Question arising: what other Guided Bus schemes have Atkins worked on?

Using Milton Road and Histon Road not good, but essential from a timing point of view. Railways not prepared to give up space for parallel running - may need this in the future. However, this would be environmentally sensitive.

Question arising: what is the likely level of environmental impact in Histon & Impington?

A lot of work undertaken by Atkins. Does **not** include taking people's front gardens (down Histon Road/Milton Road).

Key findings:

- 18,500 passenger journeys a day (9,250 return journeys)
- Can be operational end 2006 or early 2007
- Scheme will break even by 2009
- Very high cost benefit ratio - over 4.5 to 1
- *Some* relief of A14
- *Some* people will switch from car to public transport (modal shift)

Next steps - hopefully Government decision later this year. This is first multi-modal study to ask for money, and there are no Government guidebooks on how to process that (or indeed, guided bus). Still a long way to go.

Guideway a key part of the structure plan - linked to Oakington/Longstanton development.

superCAM is a consortium of three groups - Stagecoach, Rapid Transport International and Gallagher Estates. The proposals are intimately linked to the new development, and are being more positive than is likely to be the case in reality.

The were planning a Transport and Works Act order by summer 2002.

superCAM and the County Council are “not a million miles apart”. County have done more detailed work than superCAM, and superCAM have agreed with elements of County plans.

Question arising: the submissions from Gallaghers to the Structure Plan EIP are still based around a dedicated fleet of articulated buses. Similarly, the reserved matters plans for highway access to the Arbury Camp site indicate the Gallagher style rather than County style access to King’s Hedges Road. How close are Gallaghers and the County, and how can this sort of relationship develop without competitive tendering etc? What is the process to move to a single design?

Any “coming together” will be on County Council terms.

Questions:

<p>Pearl Harris 9,000 passenger journeys (return journeys), misleading timescales, misleading figures</p> <p><i>(Information from County Council - the 1999 figure for bus journeys crossing the city boundary was 20,000 total, i.e. 20,000 individual one way journeys. The Council has a target of increasing this to 24,000 by 2003.</i></p> <p><i>The current figure for passenger journeys on the five existing City park and ride sites is actually around 1.2m return journeys. This is fare-paying passengers and if children are added in who travel free, the actual figure is higher.)</i></p>	<p>Shone Johnstone - Huntingdon &amp; District Huntingdon to Cambridge route, 15-minute intervals, 8000 journeys a day</p> <p>Question arising: can this figure be confirmed?</p> <p>1,000,000 passengers journeys a year on park and ride.</p> <p>20,000 passenger journeys a day in and out of Cambridge.</p> <p>18,500 “not a lot”</p>
<p>How will this affect our daily lives? Buses will be wholly additional to current traffic.</p>	<p>Shona Johnstone - still work to be done. City has limitations.</p> <p>1993 Milton Road - cutting down trees unacceptable.</p> <p>Bus lanes, bus priorities do work elsewhere in City.</p> <p>Fully accept Drummer Street is not adequate, need to work through details. Can’t answer details today.</p> <p>Brian Smith - Drummer Street - Immediate thought is that can’t get guided bus on top of current load.</p> <p>Reducing stopping times (dwell times) is challenge. Problems getting people on/off fast enough - need fast ticketing mechanisms.</p> <p>Enough work has been done to prove it will work.</p>
<p>Mike Mason - cost benefits - CHUMMS £56M, rail £110M. Annex E £74M but not costed is work in Cambridge.</p> <p>Central area takes 27,000 passengers a day - big hole in costings to make it work.</p>	<p>Brian Smith - work undertaken has looked at where people live and where they want to go.</p> <p>Cost rise has included provision for cost increases (and would apply additionally to rail).</p> <p>Costs in City Centre are re-allocation of road space - low cost. Problems are getting into</p>

<i>(Information from County Council - the 1999 figure for bus journeys crossing the city boundary was 20,000 total, i.e. 20,000 individual one way journeys. The Council has a target of increasing this to 24,000 by 2003.)</i>	<p>centre, not in centre.</p> <p>Not all buses will do full network.</p> <p>Shona Johnstone - People will commute in both directions.</p> <p>If we'd gone with heavy rail, there would be costs moving people from station.</p> <p>Need to address transport issues in City Centre.</p>
Impington - will there be another meeting when the details can be answered.	Brian Smith - yes, there will be another meeting.
Cambridge resident - What about the destruction of Christ's Pieces	Brian Smith - this is scare mongering. There is no need.
Peter Murgatroyd - Improvements will be needed into centre of town. With developments at Mitcham's Corner, Bradwell Court does County Council have power and resources to ensure that these facilitate transport routes.	<p>Brian Smith - Work with City Council to get the planning of these developer led works as well as relevant highway works right.</p> <p>Bradwell Court - bottom line is that do not see need to expand bus station.</p> <p>County Council do not have money or powers to buy.</p> <p>There will be 'waiting and watering' facilities for buses at station.</p> <p>Question arising: a report by Stear, Davis, Gleave was put into the Structure Plan EIP as a core document. It is reported that this indicated significant development requirements at Cambridge Station. Can you give details? How will they fit in with the redevelopment proposals for the Station?</p>
What are start-up and later journeys etc	<p>Stephen Jolly - 2006 8 buses/hour each way; 2016 21 buses/hour each way.</p> <p>6 hours at peak rate, 12 hours at lower level.</p>

Transport and Works Act order - the "planning application" for the scheme.

Process gives full opportunity for public scrutiny. Everyone has a chance to look at the detail - and this process has not yet started.

"If there are any objections, there will be a Public Inquiry"

Inspector will assume, once formal Inquiry starts, that as much as possible will have been done to handle objections.

Again reference to the Structure Plan. County are not happy about required commitment to take the number of houses that are required given the lack of infrastructure. However, if the Government will invest in the infrastructure, then will, reluctantly, take houses.

Way forward - still a massive amount of work to be done. Partnerships will be vital. Can assume won't get whole £74M from Government, since scheme generates a surplus - will expect local contribution.

This contribution could be developer funding ('Section 106' monies) to transport infrastructure or Government money into scheme and higher levels of affordable housing.

But County scheme on County terms.

Consultation - will be formal, and informal. Will have to be full consultation and full detail.

Question arising: what are the likely dates? Is it still the case that there may be separate submissions by Gallaghers and the County Council? Are there therefore two separate dates?

Questions:

Chris Brown, Histon - weakness is City Centre/Drummer Street. But this would be advantage of LRT. CHUMMS study flawed because of packaging. Bus or nothing - would nothing be a better option?	Shona Johnstone - County has looked at this over many years. LRT does not offer flexibility.  At end of day we have Government decision - doing nothing is <b>not</b> an option.  Building (road building) is not an option - we can't build out of this. No guided bus probably means no A14 improvements.
A14 widening. How are these coupled?  How do we ensure that all three parts get done together?	Shona Johnstone - There are plans to widen A14. Government is linking them. Public transport first, then A14 upgrade.  Is multi-modal because of three solutions.  CHUMMS proposals very clear, and accepted.  Brian Smith - There is strong coupling - once Government accepts A14 into programme. Got to give go-ahead on all schemes at same time or else will be challenged.  They must be seen as an integrated set.
Fuff Munnelly - you say a premature meeting, but by mid 2003 you have to have detailed plans	Shona Johnstone - an extremely tight timescale. Transport and Works Act order and consultation process very important "will not be steam-rolled through"
Correlation between developers and A14. No guided bus, no A14, no Oakington/Longstanton.	Shona Johnstone - correlation A14/new settlement.  CHUMMS stands on its own without new settlement. Still need A14 upgrade.
Are there any other guided bus systems?	Brian Smith - Leeds, Bradford - Adelaide (Australia).  Shona Johnstone - County Council are specifying high quality - ride, air conditioning, quiet, good quality information - will use best technology possible.
Notification, discussion before Public Inquiry.  How will we be notified?  What about those who will be impacted se-	Yes  Stephen Jolly - if land is to be affected then will get formal letter. Will be on lampposts, street corners, and local press. Have to go on

verely?	<p>deposit in local libraries.</p> <p>Brian Smith - Would wish to, and will make contact, and ensure people know how to engage.</p> <p>Shona Johnstone - Agreed - consultation is vital.</p>
Roberts, Histon - 8 am bus got into town at 8:45. People need to get into town, get to work. How will it be made to work?	<p>Brian Smith - Maximum benefit for those living further out - minimum on those near road sections.</p> <p>Will improve, but won't be perfect.</p>

Meeting closed at 10:05

Questions arising:

- There a number of CHUMMS recommendations (rising to at least 5 components if traffic calming rat run villages is included). If they are all linked, how is that linkage "enforced" - can we be sure that they will all get done? And done together?
- What is the scale of costs for the in-town improvements? Brian Smith indicated a low level, but the Stear, Davis, Gleave report indicates possible significant expenditure. What about the cost of pre-ticketing or electronic ticketing?
- What is the impact on road traffic? There are 4/5 (more?) level crossings currently on the route, and presumably buses will have priority at these - is that the case? Has the impact on local traffic been modelled? What will happen, for example, in Station Road, Cambridge Road (Histon/Impington) and how will this impact the B1049?
- What are the possible changes to Histon Road to improve bus movements? How will these be taken forward/developed/ consulted upon? And when?
- Appendix 10 appears to cover a great deal of detail. What are the possible areas for change?
- Histon and Impington residents are going to bear the largest cost (in all senses, noise, impact, loss of amenity, loss of property values etc) from this development. What planning gain may we expect?