



Cambridge Area Bus Users Working for bus passengers in and around Cambridge

SYSTRA Meeting with interest groups attended by Peter Hardy 1 August 2018

(Edited extracts)

Attended by:

Rail Future East Anglia – Peter Wakefield

Cambridge Area Bus Users – Richard Wood; Richard Cushing; John Simpson; Simon Norton

Campaign for Better Transport (Cambridge) – Simon Norton

Smarter Transport Cambridge – Anshel Cohen; Edward Leigh

Cambridge Ahead – Emma Fletcher

Meldreth, Shepreth, Foxton Rail Users & Cam Valley Bus User Group – Cllr Susan van de Venn

Sustrans Peterborough – Rohan Wilson

Individuals – Antony Carpen

Apologies from Andy Allen, Campaign for Better Transport

No overall network – series of different services or sub-networks. There is no single plan setting out what is currently on offer. 2 years ago, Cambridge Ahead came up with its own 'underground' style map to try and provide a network overview.

The market is dominated by Stagecoach and its own fares / ticketing arrangements. The monopoly position of Stagecoach may mean there is less innovation than there might otherwise be. Also, it is unlikely that another operator would come into the area to challenge Stagecoach's strong position.

Much transport, particularly in rural areas, is not available to the public (e.g. school transport; works buses). A 'Total Transport' approach can try and integrate different types of transport, as seen as part of Cambridgeshire's Total Transport pilot project (2015-17), which looked at new different approaches to school transport and the development of the East Cambridgeshire Connect (DRT). However, such initiatives need a lot of officer time / resource to make them happen.

In many villages, passenger waiting infrastructure is inadequate, particularly lack of shelter.

In some areas, bus stop information is very poor and not always up-to-date. There is general lack of promotion of public transport. Real time displays – where available – are not always reliable. Passengers don't necessarily appreciate the difference between real time and scheduled time information.

Rural bus services are not fit for purpose in that travel options for employment and other purposes are so limited.

Services have gradually declined, particularly where they are partly supported. Services are each viewed in isolation, rather than as part of a network. A co-ordinated approach is not always taken by neighbouring authorities in relation to cross-boundary services.

Multi-operator ticketing is available, but at a higher cost than single operator tickets. On the Busway, revenue from such tickets is split according to use between the two operators. However, on other services, revenue is kept by whichever operator sells the ticket.

For people using Cambridge Plusbus, this represents good value at £3.80 – cheaper than Stagecoach's own day-ticket. Plusbus tickets are not available from ticket machines, yet many stations are unstaffed.

Cambourne – being developed with poor bus facilities, suggesting that land use planning and transport need to be considered together. The X5 used to stop on the edge of the development before the bypass was built, but now doesn't serve the community.

Traffic calming measures may work against bus operation, such as Citi2 to Science Park in Chesterton area.

The Whippet-operated 'U' service is a good innovation, supported by the University, in that it links up places in a new way, rather than focusing on the centre. More of this type of service is needed, particularly as Cambridge has dispersed patterns of employment. The city will expand in the future and new jobs will be on the periphery.

Deregulation has allowed operators to 'cherry-pick' services. For example, the 7 misses out the villages, but the 7A misses out Addenbrookes. The inability to cross-subsidise services in the deregulated environment means that rural or peripheral services are compromised. Commercial and tendered services are seen quite separately; Fen Ditton to Waterbeach would be better served by extending Citi3 service, rather than a separate service.

Cambridge North rail station has good infrastructure for buses, but limited provision (Citi2 and hourly Busway). It would be useful for buses from the rural hinterland to go there.

Of those at the meeting, all but 2 were in favour of bus franchising. The 2 were uncertain, as there were revenue risks and it would be the public sector who would need to take up these risks.