

# CAMBRIDGE AREA BUS USERS

## Response of the Executive Committee to the CPCA Bus Network Review

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The Executive Committee of Cambridge Area Bus Users (CABU) welcomes this opportunity to respond to the CPCA's Bus Network Review. By virtue of being an organisational response it is not really appropriate to respond via the online survey, so CABU is submitting a prose document, trusting that the CPCA will find this both practical and useful.

### General points

CABU can't really see the point of spending time and money on these short-term changes, which simply replace one set of partly-unsatisfactory routes and times with a set that's marginally improved, but which remains straitjacketed by the need to avoid conflicting with "commercial" services. So the revisions don't necessarily make problems go away, and they won't until we have franchised services that can combine sections from the commercial and supported sectors into one meaningful county-wide network.

We also take issue with the suggestion that this is in any way a "Bus Network Review". It's a review of a subset of CPCA-supported services whose output is a new, modified subset of supported services.

CABU has been very concerned for some time by the limited promotion of CPCA-supported bus services. This directly links to the use (and, therefore, viability) of these services, of course. And now we have a consultation which, similarly, has received little promotion amongst the bus passengers it is going to affect and who should be most involved. The Combined Authority's dedicated public transport website

<https://transport.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/>

claims to be "*the digital home of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Transport*", but includes no mention of the consultation that we've been able to track down (however, that's just one of quite a number of serious shortcomings with the site). Input "bus reform" into the search box on the main CPCA website and no relevant results are retrieved. There's nothing about it in the "Latest News" either. Prior to its announcement at last month's Transport Committee meeting there had been nothing to prepare for its appearance. Understandably, if you know the survey exists it's possible to locate it via the usual external search engines. Overall, though, we find the level of engagement with the travelling public to be quite inadequate, and this is bound to impact on the responses received and to call into question the validity of the survey's outcomes.

Moreover the layout of the Bus Network Review materials is poor, making it difficult to follow exactly what is proposed. PDFs have no page numbering; tables of Pros and Cons (and in one instance the headers) are spilt between different pages of the PDFs. Similarly timetables of proposed routes lack page numbers, with timetable information flowing over two PDF pages. For example, one could be forgiven for imagining that Route Cambridge B Outbound's Saturday service ended at Quy Road as the stops and time information from Vicarage Lane to The Guineas Bus Station have run over to the following page. It doesn't really encourage a close reading of the documentation.

The proposals are seriously unclear about the status of existing CPCA-supported services that aren't referenced in the documentation (some of which are referenced individually elsewhere in this response). Are we supposed to assume they continue unchanged? If so, it means that maps of the future network give an incomplete picture of the revised network. And that's before you start to think about how these proposals fit with the commercial network. In order to adequately assess the proposals being surveyed there is a need for much clearer documentation that shows how new and revised services fit in with existing routes that will (presumably) be continuing as they are.

To give one specific example: what are the residents of Teversham to make of these proposals? One of the routes that serves the village, the 16A, is listed in the East Cambridgeshire document's "Services before" and is folded into the new East Cambridgeshire Service A. But on closer inspection of the maps accompanying this, it seems as though Teversham is no longer part of the route. Nowhere is this mentioned explicitly. Doesn't that qualify as a "Con"? Another of the village's services, the 18, is again listed in the "Services before", but in this case doesn't appear on any map, and there's no mention of its future. Teversham's remaining route is the PR2 commuter service (those Stetchworth trips are CPCA-supported). This is simply ignored by the documentation. So how many of Teversham's three services will form part of the new "network"? And why is it so difficult to determine this from the documentation?

A significant number of villages are set to lose their scheduled bus services. There's a certain amount of "retrenchment" here that conflicts with the positive message that the review seems to be trying to get across.

It's unfortunate – but not unexpected – that the concept of a "bus network" extends only to routes and timetables. The continued lack of through fares where "connections" are to be made (even when these are all under CPCA control) and the continued exclusion of some operators from the Multibus scheme – even when they're operating CPCA-supported services (you would expect signing up for Multibus to be a contractual requirement) – rather diminishes the concept of a "bus network". Apparently ticketing isn't thought of as an element of the "bus network". It definitely is by passengers!.

We think we detect a move, in the draft timetables, towards more regular or consistent times (whether hourly or two-hourly). If so, this is a very positive move and most welcome, as irregular schedules (which can seem erratic to casual observers) are a disincentive to passengers and potential passengers.

## Cambridge proposals

Loss of direct services to Addenbrooke's (which applies to at least four villages in this area) might matter less if through fares were available (see above) This seems not to have been considered – or, if it was considered, has been disregarded.

We find it more than a little surprising that Hauxton – which is barely outside the Cambridge City boundary – cannot be provided with a scheduled bus service. Yes, it was added to the Tiger DRT network in mid-July, but is that an adequate alternative?

Extending the current T2 to cover the “gap” between Madingley Rd P&R and Grantchester begs the question: who is this for? Coton will be served by more buses but they go to one or other P&R. The existing 8 (which becomes the new Huntingdonshire Service B) isn't much used as it is (and will have a reduced service as part of under these proposals), but perhaps a more regular and frequent service will increase custom? There's no shortage, of course, of services (4, 905, X2, X3) serving the Coton Turn.

Cambridge Services B & C – previously T4 & T5: *“... people travelling from Newmarket, Burwell, and Reach will be able to connect more easily to buses going to and from Cambridge city centre.”* In the case of Newmarket and Burwell this is complete nonsense. Both already have quite decent direct services to Cambridge city centre (11 and T5). And no connections will be needed, even under the revised proposals.

Rejigging the T4 and T5 timetables so that passengers can easily connect between the two services (which have different destinations at both ends of their routes) is definitely a good idea (it's strange that nobody considered this when these Tiger services were first introduced). Will there be requirements on the contracted operators to wait for late-running services, so that these are **guaranteed connections**, rather than merely a theoretical concept?

The heading to the timetable for Cambridge Service B (unnumbered pages 2-5 of the timetable PDF) says it operates Monday-Friday. This is surely incorrect and should have been picked up before the consultation opened.

The heading to the timetable for Cambridge Service C (unnumbered pages 6-7 of the timetable PDF) says it operates Monday-Friday. Presumably this is another error? Not a good look.

The future of Cambridge Service D (previously the 75) is dependent on the X75. What happens to the residents of Wimpole, Tadlow and Wrestlingworth if/when Mid-Bedfordshire Council run out of government-provided money to support the X75? Will yet more expensive Demand Responsive offerings be required?

It is a positive development that Cambridge Service E will run more frequently than the

current 26 (about once an hour throughout the day) and be the service that travels on to Bassingbourn (instead of Service F, formerly 17). The longer operating day, giving more travel options early and late, may make commuter journeys more feasible than currently.

Exactly 12 months ago Thriplow's service was decimated (reduced to one peak-hour trip in each direction). Now a "significant enhancement" is being proposed – effectively restoring the original frequency. No explanation is provided or justification offered. Nobody is admitting that the previous cuts were ill-considered. This doesn't exactly inspire confidence in the decision-making at the CPCA. How robust will the latest set of changes prove to be, we wonder?

The proposal for Cambridge Service F – previously 17 – results in Harston losing its direct services to Addenbrookes, and yet this is not considered worth mentioning in the "Cons" column. Yes, you can change at Trumpington Park and Ride – but see earlier comments about the lack of through ticketing.

## **East Cambridgeshire proposals**

Where does the 46A fit into these plans? It's not in the map of current services, isn't mentioned in the text, and doesn't seem to fit into the future arrangements (which largely duplicate it). This is curious, given that it's a CPCA-supported service, and has only recently been re-tendered. Is it being quietly axed? Or retained in its current form? How are passengers (this is quite well-used at present) supposed to know?

See the General comments for concerns regarding existing service 18. Just what is its future, and how is anyone reading these proposals supposed to know? (It's been less of a lifeline since the introduction of the T4, but surely it needs to be mentioned, not just ignored – or forgotten?)

## **Huntingdonshire proposals**

There is no reference to the St Ives town circular service 300, even though this is supported (Mon-Fri) by the CPCA. Does the number of customers using the St Ives town circular service 300 justify the expenditure on it, not least since much of its route is covered also by Busway Services A and B? That said, it does provide a useful link to the Morrisons supermarket. Its omission from the proposed network is unexplained, which is quite unsatisfactory.

Again, there is lack of clarity surrounding existing CPCA-supported service 150. It's not mentioned, nor is it mapped. And yet it serves Tilbrook, Kimbolton and Great Staughton, which are mentioned in connection with new service E. Is it correct to assume that the 150 will be retained and is unaffected by the proposal for service E? If some of the more-informed CABU members can't make sense of the documentation, what hope is there for passengers who don't invest quite so much of their time trying to understand the proposals?

In January 2026 (CPCA Transport Committee documents), services 400 and 401 came with *“a recommendation to significantly amend the service to make it more attractive/cost effective”*. They came with “value for money” ratings of 55% and 61% respectively. The report to the Transport Committee continued: *“By conducting the public engagement and considering integration and efficiency options will enable faster solutions and a more stable and integrated network and would enable the committee to make a more informed decision in June”*. Did the public engagement referred to happen before the latest proposals were prepared? If so, where are the results of that engagement? And what else happened to steer the conversation away from amending the services towards removing most of both routes (save for the modest incorporation of some communities into Huntingdonshire Service E) in favour of a DRT service which currently costs almost twice per passenger to operate? There is a worrying lack of transparency in the process. And, possibly, of logic in the outcome.

It is proposed to withdraw the T12 entirely, and not to provide any replacement between the two sides of the Great Ouse, other than a lengthy diversion via St Ives. The additional Great Ouse crossing was behind the decision to invest in the service in the first place. In January 2026, the Transport Committee approved a proposal that a replacement service for the 5A and T12 should *“offer a consistent and improved service compared to the current offering”*. It is hard to square this decision with a proposal just a few months later that does away with one of these services and which provides no meaningful replacement. We can find no evidence in its papers that the Transport Committee was involved in this proposal.

The increased frequency proposed for Service A is welcome. But with the CPCA likely to approve funding for the Bar Hill-Longstanton section of Stagecoach’s service 5, there is potentially scope for rationalisation of the proposals covering this section of the Huntingdonshire A.

The proposed Service B timetable for the communities of Dry Drayton, Madingley and Coton is most puzzling. Journeys to Cambridge provide either 40 minutes in Cambridge or a rather over-extended 280 minutes. Who are these timings intended for? In the opposite direction, only one return journey is possible. That provides a decent enough time for shopping in Bar Hill of 133 minutes, and a rather less adequate time in St Ives (a plausible destination, given that there are two markets there per week, and a Farmers’ Market twice-monthly) of just 8 minutes. Yes, just 8 minutes! It’s also well-nigh impossible to reconcile the proposed timetable with the assertion in the documentation that the *“two journeys that continue beyond Bar Hill will run at broadly similar times to today’s service 8”*. That statement simply doesn’t stand up to scrutiny. Did anyone look at the timetable for the 8 before writing that?

The proposed fast service provided by Huntingdonshire Service C direct from St Ives to Huntingdon is most welcome, reinstating an abandoned route that is still missed by many in the St Ives area. Steps will need to be taken, though, to ensure that buses are able to navigate through Houghton village – additional parking restrictions may be needed or small vehicles used (although the latter option is unlikely, given that this service also runs along the Busway).

According to the text Huntingdonshire Service C will continue to operate Mon-Sat; but the proposed timetable gives days of operation as MTWHF only. Which is right? (And since when has “H” been used as the abbreviation for “Thursday”? Nobody understands this!)

According to the text the existing T1 (future C) will be “*extended between St Ives and Ramsey*”. This makes no sense. Perhaps “... *between Huntingdon and St Ives*” was intended?

Regarding Huntingdonshire Service D the text says: “*Two return journeys per day will also continue onward to Pidley, Warboys, Bury and Ramsey, retaining these important shopping links*”. But one of these services arrives into St Ives at 0726, which is hardly ideal for shopping! In fact, one of the journeys in each direction is for Cambridge area commuters (one of the original Busway Feeder services) and only one for shoppers. Careless drafting again. However, Warboys and Pidley also have a regular service to St Ives with CPCA-supported service 302, which isn’t mentioned anywhere in this documentation and which the wording of the quote above suggests the document’s author is quite unaware of (which is worrying in itself).

*Submitted on behalf of the Cambridge Area Bus Users Executive Committee by Hugh Taylor (Acting Chair).*

*27 July 2026*

Please address any comments, questions, etc. by email to the Secretary, Richard Wood at:  
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