

## Cambridge Cycling Campaign Statement to Cambridgeshire Guided Bus Inquiry

I'm Jim Chisholm, a campaigner and committee member with Cambridge Cycling Campaign, and I've been a commuting cyclist for some 30 years, not all of it in Cambridge. (please feel free to interrupt me)

By way of introduction Cambridge Cycling Campaign is a local voluntary organisation with over 700 members. We try to work closely with local government and others to improve conditions for cyclist in Cambridge and the surrounding area. Local government statistics show more than 25% of local people cycle to work and this is by far the highest figure for the UK. Our 'Mission Statement' is:

'For better, safer and more cycling in and around Cambridge

First we'd like to give a little background.

- According to the Council's Traffic Monitoring Report some 3000 cyclists enter Cambridge each week day from the surrounding villages, and even out of University term some 21000 cycle trips cross the river Cam each day
- For the Southern Fringe of Cambridge we already have nearly 1000 cycle trips into the city each weekday, and that is before the construction of some 3000 new houses. All this area will be within 2.5 miles of the main station and the many secondary and further education establishments in that area for cyclists using the proposed new route.
- In the Northern Fringe we have the Science Park, Cambridge Regional College with 3000 full-time students and 14000 part-time ones, as well as other large proposed commercial developments including a new rail station. Within 5 miles of these along the proposed new routes we will have 10 000 new houses at Northstowe.
- By the time the proposed expansion around Cambridge is complete, we think the Councils should be aiming for over a million trips by bike each year. (1000 in and 1000 out for both northern and southern sections, 5 days per week 50 weeks per year). With a route that is properly surfaced and lit that should be easily achievable.
- We should also like to point out that in the Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2004 – 2011) there is over 4 million pounds for *'Improved Pedestrian and Cycle Access to Rapid Transit'* over 4 years. That compares with a total of 6 million for cycle schemes on all the other main corridors into Cambridge over 7 years
- The proposed maintenance track provides the opportunity to provide routes for cyclists that are direct, continuous, segregated from normal motor traffic, and break barriers to cycling caused by major roads such as the A14. It is an opportunity that must not be squandered.

- We'd now like to focus on the rebuttal document CCC/CcyC/REB1

Firstly, we need to correct a statement made in the introduction to the rebuttal document, where it says that the *'Campaign supports the concept of the Guided Busway'* when in fact our statement of case says we *'Support the principle of improved public transport and will not object to the principle'* of the guided busway.

We'll now go through the rebuttal document dealing with each point, and please note that we still have major concerns over the nature of the proposed surface, and the lack of lighting

(para.3.1) Discontinuity of the cycleway in the vicinity of Hills Road Bridge  
We are happy that all recent documents show a resolution of this issue.

(para.3.2-3.3) **Lack of hard surface for the maintenance track/bridleway**

We are very concerned at the failure to appreciate the nature and volumes of cycle traffic. These routes in the Urban Fringe will not primarily be a leisure route but ones used by commuters, students and shoppers (Utility trips). The planners of developments in many of these areas are asking for at least 25% of trips to be by bike. The Southern Fringe alone is expected to have an additional 3,000 dwellings. The proposed surface although initially hard and smooth will not be tarmac or similar. Those who have used leisure routes with similar surfaces will know that they soon become eroded, uneven and covered in debris. On an unsealed surface debris such as leaves becomes incorporated as 'mud' into a porous surface rather than being washed or brushed off. Cycling such routes in wet weather results in mud splashes, not what I want on my smart work clothes, and the vast majority of cyclists doing utility trips are wearing their normal clothes.

We are also concerned that the 'letter of comfort' from the County Council states that *'providing a firmer surface on the Northern Section could result in the requirements of equestrians being compromised. Firmer surfaces provide less grip for horses potentially resulting in horses slipping if not falling'* (County Council ref. obj/1230,1266 &2267). Given the balance of likely use between equestrians and cyclists, and the risk to cyclist caused by loose surfaces, we think it is the requirements of cyclists that are being seriously compromised.

We do not think any consideration has been taken of the increased rolling resistance (and therefore increased effort required, and increased journey times) and lack of comfort when cycling on such surfaces. On a leisure route where the objectives are fun and exercise such a surface may be acceptable. For 'Utility' trips it brings misery. In fact because cycles lack suspension a smoother surface than that tolerated by motor vehicles is recommended in Dutch standards for cycle routes.

Although there are suggestions that a different surface could be introduced at a later date (CCCGPH/5 para.3.95), this could conflict with the Environment Agency's requirement for Sustainable Drainage. Any change from a porous surface to a tarmac surface could result in a veto from the Environment Agency to the provision of tarmac surface

unless major changes to drainage are undertaken. (see CCCGPH/5 para. 3.93)

(para.3.4-3.9) Following discussions with Mr Menzies we are satisfied that the provision of Toucan style crossings will not seriously disadvantage cyclists at these locations.

(para.3.10-3.14) We will take up the issues of 'better provision needed where bridleways cross the guideway' and 'Lack of access to and across the guideway at several points along the route' as part of the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan and the Local Transport Plan, but have concerns that the 'permeability' of developments as recommended in PPG13 is being compromised by lack of breaks in the Guideway.

(para.3.15) **Suitable Lighting is needed**

We believe the authorities fail to understand three principal problems:

1. That when in the dark a cyclist meets a vehicle, such as a Guided Bus, with full headlights, or with 'dipped' lights if passing to the right, it is not possible to see for a short time after the vehicle has passed especially if no other vehicles with lights are within sight. A cyclist travelling at just over 10mph (18kph) will travel 50m in 10 seconds. Even with a good quality 'British Standard' bike light a cyclist could be partially blind for much of that distance. On one lightly trafficked unlit road which I not infrequently use during the hours of darkness, I'm sometimes forced to stop almost completely when approached by a vehicle that fails to dip its powerful headlights, other wise I may cycle off the unmarked edge of the road.
2. There will be no law requiring cyclists, pedestrians, or horse riders to use lights on this route. No doubt responsible cyclists will have and use lights, but such lights as required for road use are not designed for good illumination and a bike light is in fact limited to the same wattage as the rear light on a car! (show light)
3. Much of the route within the Urban Fringe is adjacent to areas with lighting such as adjacent roads, security lighting in premises, and even floodlight playing areas. South Cambridgeshire has recently granted planning permission for 8 15metre high towers to light an all weather playing area at Cambridge Regional College, adjacent to the route. Far from aiding cyclists this can produce areas of high contrast that make seeing even more difficult

Given the levels of existing light pollution in these areas it seems totally unreasonable to penalise the safety and convenience of cyclists who wish to use this route by refusing to consider any form of lighting.

The 'Letter of Comfort' from the County Council states:

*"Provision of lighting (between Histon and Milton Road and on the Southern Fringe) As you will be aware the current CGB proposals do not include lighting of any kind alongside the maintenance track and guideway on these sections.*

.....

*Therefore, in order to reduce light pollution in a predominantly rural area lighting will only be included at highway junctions and at stops, not along the maintenance track between junctions. In addition we also do not consider other forms of low level lighting and LED lights to be appropriate”*

These are routes that we would expect school aged children will use, as part of ‘Safer Routes to Schools’ or to learn to travel independently These are routes that are near to commercial premises with hundred of watts of security lighting. These are routes that run near roads with poor quality non-directional, no cut-off street lights. Yet it is not proposed to use any lighting because the area is \*\*\* **predominantly rural**\*\*\*

We consider that some form of lighting, in the Urban Fringe is essential

(para.3.16) We are glad that it is accepted that the required height for the tunnel needs to be 2.4 m

In Conclusion

We consider that the case for a high quality route for cyclists within the urban fringe and as far as the new settlement is indisputable. Such a route requires a smooth tarmac type surface, and some form of lighting

We are very concerned that statements in the County Council documents for the TWA regarding lighting and surfacing could be used in the future to deny the use of the significant LTP monies to upgrade the route.

Thank you for your time and I’m happy to answer any questions.