

News from Cambridgeshire County Council

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Author: Mark Miller
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LATE SUMMER OPENING FOR GUIDED BUSWAY

A decision has been made to open the guided busway from Cambridge to St Ives in the late summer.

It was anticipated that in addition to test running the guideway would have the first commercial services running in spring but after a review over the New Year period we have come to the view that it is more realistic to have services running in late summer.

A review of progress of the project has just been completed. Flooding in the Fen Drayton lakes area followed by the cold snap has delayed completion of culverts, with knock on effects on embankment construction in advance of laying the guideway. Delays have also occurred because of the current contract negotiations.

The later opening, however, will mean all the high quality facilities which have been promised and the people of Cambridgeshire deserve will be in place. This includes modern bus stops, ticket machines, real-time service information, CCTV and better access for wheelchair and pushchair users.

Buses will be running on the guideway in the spring to test the system and the use of Smartcards on buses so they can be introduced from the beginning on the busway.

We are concentrating our efforts on completing the Northern section by late summer and more details on the Southern section timetable will follow.

The works on Hills Road Bridge have faced complications. Undertaking such a complex job within such a confined area has proved to be more difficult than anticipated. This means regrettably that work will continue into the summer.

The spring opening depended on continued good progress and would have meant some ancillary features may not have been finished for the start of services.

The contract does give the County Council the opportunity to impose financial penalties for delays in delivery.

Cambridgeshire County Councillor Matt Bradney, Cabinet Member for Transport said: “We were hopeful, maybe optimistically so, that the Guided Busway could be open in spring as long as work continued at a pace and did not run into difficulties. After a review over the New Year we have concluded that a more realistic date is late summer.

“I am very disappointed that we are not opening earlier but I want to be realistic and not over optimistic and deliver from the start a system that has all the high quality facilities that passengers and Cambridgeshire deserve. I understand residents’ disappointment that buses will not be running until late summer but when the guideway does open it will be a high quality service providing a fast, frequent and reliable journey between Cambridge, St Ives and Huntingdon.”

ENDS

Notes for editors:

Contact Cambridgeshire County Councillor Matt Bradney, Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure on 01954 204347 or 07739 393137.

For further political comment call County Councillors Alex Reid (Liberal Democrat) on 01223 356537 or Elizabeth Hughes (Labour) on 01223 313764.

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