

Cambridgeshire County Councillor John Reynolds

Dear Reader

Cambridgeshire Guided Busway

Work continues with the Contractor Bam Nuttall to resolve the defects on the northern section which are preventing Cambridgeshire County Council from accepting this section of the Busway. There are six defects which either result in a reduced quality of experience for the users such as the ponding on the cycleway and at St Ives Park and Ride, or have the potential to be longer term maintenance liabilities such as the foundations or the River Great Ouse Bridge Joints. The Council made it clear to BAM Nuttall last summer that these issues needed to be addressed satisfactorily before handover would be accepted. An opening date cannot be announced until there is absolute certainty that the necessary work will be completed.

On the southern section, work is substantially complete at the Railway Station forecourt and work is progressing in a number of areas including Hills Road underpass, Trumpington Cutting and at the connection to Trumpington Park and Ride. This work is proceeding in accordance with the Contractor's current programme which has work physically completed in mid December 2010. The Council will not announce an opening date for the southern section until all necessary inspections have been completed.

The bus operators have been operating the new buses on the existing routes. There are anecdotal reports that the higher quality vehicles are already attracting increased patronage.

A pilot of the multi-operator smartcard ticketing system is underway on Whippet's buses, and is going well. It is expected that this will shortly be extended to Stagecoach's buses in the St Ives A14 corridor. Stagecoach are now promoting their own period tickets on smartcards, the two systems are fully compatible as they both operate on the ITSO national standard. This will be the first commercial multi-operator smartcard system in the country and it is hoped in due course to expand it beyond the Busway services to a countywide system. Concessionary passes are already issued as ITSO smartcards and are being used as such on Whippet buses.

Third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan

Consultation on the third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan took place in the period January - April 2010.

Analysis of the locations from which responses were received, together with feedback from Members and the public, indicated that there were areas of the county where the coverage of leaflet delivery had not been robust. The County Council has therefore arranged for an extension of the consultation period until 30 July. Leaflets will be redistributed in late June and early July. Some households in areas where redelivery will take place will have previously received leaflets.

Northstowe eco-town demonstrator

Funding has been allocated to Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, and Cambridgeshire Horizons to deliver a package of demonstrator projects in advance of the Northstowe eco-town being developed. The work includes the retro-fitting of energy saving and efficiency measures to existing houses in Rampton drift, a set of studies to inform and improve the evidence base in advance of a revised planning application, and the delivery of a building at a Park and Ride site on the Busway to showcase energy efficient building materials, methods, and renewable energy technology.

It is proposed that the County Council delivers the building element of the package, which could incorporate a ground source heat pump, a green roof, photo-voltaic cells, or other renewable energy measures. Construction techniques and materials will make the building as energy efficient as possible. The building will provide an exhibition space for material on the retrofit project, and other information about Northstowe as well as providing a terminal building for park and ride users. The building needs to be delivered before April next year and is therefore a challenging timetable. There is a risk that funding for this work could be withdrawn by the new Government as part of its spending review.

New Director of Learning appointed

Cambridgeshire County Council has appointed Gayle Gorman as its new Service Director of Learning. Gayle has been employed by the National Strategies since July 2009 as the Senior Director for Literacy, responsible for leading on primary literacy at a national level. Prior to this, she held a range of senior roles within the National Strategies, helping to advise on and shape educational policies. The National Strategies are professional development programmes for early years, primary and secondary school teachers, practitioners and managers. They are designed to improve the quality of learning and teaching in schools and early years settings and raise standards of attainment.

Before her work with the National Strategies, Gayle was a lead senior advisor at Essex County Council and an advisor at Suffolk County Council. She worked as a primary teacher before joining Suffolk in 1997.

Gayle will take up her new post on 30 June 2010. She succeeds Helen Whiter, who retired at the end of March. Her role as Service Director of Learning will include responsibility for standards and effectiveness in Cambridgeshire's nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, early years and child care services, professional development and education support services.

Cllr David Harty, Cambridgeshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Learning said: "I am delighted to welcome someone of Gayle's calibre and experience to Cambridgeshire. She will be an invaluable asset both to schools and education services as a whole, and also to the senior leadership team at the County Council."

Yours

John Reynolds

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