

GREATER ANGLIA RAIL FRANCHISE

DfT CONSULATION 2010

Response from



Cambridge and St. Ives Railway Organisation

Including detailed proposal for

New Cambridge North Station

An alternative solution – a cost-effective quick win

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document is the formal response from CAST.IRON (see back page for details of the organisation) to the Department for Transport's consultation in the Greater Anglia rail franchise [ref 1].

CAST.IRON envisages and supports significant growth in the rail services in East Anglia, especially those focused around **Cambridge** (the largest growth area in the region) and offers a suggestion on how capacity can be increased and services improved in the *short-term* by a *cost-effective* solution.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CAST.IRON urges that a new station to the north of Cambridge be provided urgently (ideally by December 2011) and that the new franchisee be required to serve it as soon as it is built.

Cambridgeshire County Council has been promoting a station to the north of Cambridge, in the Chesterton area, since the late 1980s. This station won the support of the SRA and both National Express East Anglia (NXEA) and First Capital Connect (FCC) are required to serve the station when it *eventually* opens.

When these franchises were let it was envisaged that the station would open in 2009 or 2010. NXEA's franchise started on 1st April 2004 and FCC's on 1st April 2006. As far as the public are concerned the station is no further forward. No construction has commenced, despite the undisputed need for it.

Cambs County Council says a north Cambridge station "*is very much a priority regionally.*" [ref 2]

Conservative election publicity says "*Cambridge could have done with a station to the north of the city. It would have meant far less congestion getting to the existing rail station, particularly for South Cambridgeshire residents*" [ref 3].

Julian Huppert, the Lib Dem prospective parliamentary candidate for Cambridge says that that a north Cambridge station is "*extremely important ... crucial for the future sustainability of Cambridge*" [ref 2].

The total cost of the Chesterton station project, which until recently had a start date of 2012/13 and an envisaged completion date of 2015/16, is estimated at around £24 million. Around £20m of this would have been funded from the Regional Funding Allocation (RFA).

Because of the abolition of the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) the new station is '*at risk*' and the ruling Conservatives are publicly claiming in election literature that the station will NOT now happen [ref 3].

CAST.IRON proposes the construction of a smaller north Cambridge station, within 1km of the planned location, which can be delivered at a fraction of the cost in a much shorter timescale. In order to achieve substantial cost savings, in which compensation to train operators would be minimised, construction would need to be timed to coincide with the works being undertaken at Cambridge station in 2011 to provide a new island platform. This proposal (described below) would not prejudice the long-term development of the planned station but time must not be lost.

CAST.IRON urges that the Department for Transport considers the detailed proposal included in this document and that the DfT includes the *requirement* to serve the new station within the Greater Anglia franchise. The modest cost required to open CAST.IRON's proposed station would be within Network Rail's discretionary scheme limit.

3. CAMBRIDGE: A RECENT HISTORY

According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), the population of *Cambridge city* in 2001 was 108,879. The following table shows the historical growth.

Year	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Population	69,583	74,729	80,311	89,159	99,168	87,209	107,496	108,879

However, the above table masks the fact that much of the population growth has taken place outside of the city, particularly to the north of Cambridge in areas such as Milton (pop. 4,275 in 2001), Histon (pop. 4,450) and Impington (4,090) villages which are part of South Cambridgeshire. The population increase in South Cambridgeshire (which does not include Cambridge city) was 21.3% between 1981 and 2001 and is continuing to grow. In addition, employment opportunities in this area are very significant, such as Europe's largest Science Park, Business Park, Innovation Centre all within a small area.

Despite population and employment growth there has been little improvement to the rail services in Cambridge in the last decade. The last major improvement occurred in the late 1990s when services to London King's Cross were increased in frequency and journey times reduced to a headline 46 minutes. No additional London services have been provided since, although platform 1 was extended in 2009 to allow the introduction of 12-car services from May 2009 but these operate only on the 07:15 and 07:45 Mon-Fri services to King's Cross. Overcrowding is *serious* both on the trains and at Cambridge Station.

Other rail improvements included an hourly direct service to Stansted Airport in 1998, a reintroduced direct service to Norwich (hourly) in September 2002 (with 2-car trains, soon to be strengthened to 3-car), and a phased increase in the frequency of trains to Ipswich (single-car trains soon to be strengthened to 2-car), which are now hourly.

Given the population growth, increased congestion on the roads and government targets to reduce the impact of climate change, the improvements in rail services from Cambridge, whilst welcome, are considered by many to be the *bare minimum* that could have been achieved. There is huge potential.

4. SHORT-TERM ASPIRATIONS FOR GREATER ANGLIA RAIL FRANCHISE

In its submission to the Greater Anglia franchise consultation, CAST.IRON calls for the following:

1. Peak-time 12-car trains to Liverpool Street
2. Faster services to Liverpool Street to be more competitive with King's Cross
3. Direct trains to Stratford
4. Half-hourly trains to Stansted Airport
- 5. Station to the north of Cambridge**
6. Feasibility study into the long-term provision of a station just south of Addenbrooke's Hospital.

Item 1 is capable of being delivered, subject to sufficient rolling stock, by the new island platform at Cambridge, with effect from December 2011.

CAST.IRON considers item 4 to be vital in order reduce the number of journeys by car or taxi along the M11 to Stansted Airport. The current hourly service, which is regularly cancelled requiring an inconvenient change at Bishop's Stortford (or a taxi from Cambridge), is too high a risk and too poor a service to tempt time-sensitive business travellers to use the train.

Outside the Greater Anglia area, CAST.IRON calls for longer trains from King's Cross to Cambridge.

Many other organisations, such as local authorities, rail user groups and the national rail campaigning group *Railfuture*, will make the case for these and additional rail improvements.

For the remainder of this document, CAST.IRON will concentrate on its proposal for item 5: a proposal that it believes it is qualified to promote: a new station to the north of Cambridge.

5. POLITICAL IMPERATIVE TO DELIVER VISIBLE RAIL IMPROVEMENT IN SHORT-TERM

Cambridgeshire has a very poor record in delivering rail improvements that capture the public's imagination.

Cambridgeshire is one of very few counties in the whole of Great Britain where not a single new railway station has been opened in the past 50 years [ref 4] even though it is a growth area!

Cambridgeshire County Council has promoted a station to the north of Cambridge since the late 1980s, although the cost has increased dramatically during this period. It did once support (along with Cambridge City Council) a station at Addenbrooke's Hospital but this has been dropped because Network Rail claimed that there was insufficient capacity to stop trains south of Cambridge, although the local authorities did not ask for evidence to support this claim.

Until the late 1990s Cambridgeshire County Council supported the reopening of the mothballed Cambridge to St. Ives line, which would have seen six stations reopened. However, this was abandoned seemingly because a £1m a year subsidy would be required, and the county council is now constructing a highly-controversial concrete kerb-guided busway on that route, much to the anger of many local citizens who consider it an extravagant white elephant.

The public have seen the railway line electrified to King's Lynn (in the early 1990s) and the opening of Stansted Airport station (45km away by road) but neither was promoted by the county council; or designed for the people of Cambridge. The improvements to services are invisible to non-rail users, and the island platform being built at Cambridge station will actually reduce the end-to-end journey experience for passengers as a longer walking route, involving steps, will be required to reach the train.

In effect, no-one in Cambridge or the surrounding area has seen *any* tangible evidence, in the form of new infrastructure, to show *any* improvement of or investment in the railway. This is hardly conducive to increase usage of the railway, which every taxpayer supports heavily (almost £200 each per year).

By comparison, Cambridgeshire residents have seen substantial investment poured into the bus services, in the form of subsidised services, park and ride and the guided busway (originally expected to cost £116.2m and now certain to exceed £161m). However, these bus services generally only serve people making local journeys, and patronage is skewed towards those with a low income.

People in Cambridgeshire are envious of other parts of Britain that have seen major rail improvements whilst they have got *nothing*. CAST.IRON believes that it is politically vital (not just to the local authority, but also to the government and rail industry) that a new rail infrastructure scheme is delivered in the county in the next two years, with evidence of its implementation being visible very quickly.

There is only one *immediate* infrastructure scheme that would demonstrate a commitment to rail, and provide local taxpayers with value for money. This is a station to the north of Cambridge. The planned Chesterton Station is not deliverable within the next three years – even if the government were to sign over 100% of the funds with immediate effect because of the level of infrastructure work to be done, most of it on the operational railway. However, a *radically rethought solution*, which would cause no additional interruption to the operational railway, could easily be delivered for December 2011, which is the planned completion date for the island platform and the start of the new timetable.

Cambridgeshire County Council's reputation has been severely damaged over the last year because of the substantial delays and significant cost overrun in the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway. **A new railway station opened in December 2011 would help restore Cambs County Council's credibility in delivering transport improvements that actually benefit the public.**

Network Rail has a reputation for acting slowly and producing expensive solutions. **If Network Rail managed to open a station in only 18 months for a low cost this would capitalise on the good will it achieved when Workington North station was opened just a week after the Cumbria floods.**

6. NEED FOR A NORTH CAMBRIDGE STATION

6.1 Why a North Cambridge station is needed

There are three key reasons why a new station to the north of Cambridge is needed:

1. Far too many people from the north of Cambridge are not using the railway because it is too difficult to access the existing station (by *any* mode of transport)
2. Far too many people are travelling through the congested Cambridge streets to access Cambridge station
3. Cambridge station is effectively at capacity, and cannot safely cope with significantly more passengers without remodelling the station to allow greater capacity for passenger entry and exit, car parking, bicycle racks, additional barriers etc.

It can take up to 45 minutes to travel by car or taxi from the north of Cambridge to Cambridge station at peak time. The route would typically be Milton Road, Elizabeth Way, East Road, Mill Road, Tenison Road, Station Road, most of which are residential roads.

It also takes around 45 minutes to travel by bus – despite the use of bus lanes – excluding the time taken to change buses. However, an express bus service, from the Cambridge Science Park, to the city centre and onto the station is optimistically *predicted* (but unproven) to take just over 20 minutes.

Cambridge station has the highest number of passengers in its history and is now the second highest used station in East Anglia (after Chelmsford). Figures from the Office of Rail Regulation for 2008/09 (http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/upload/xls/station_usage_0809.xls) show:

2008/09 Entries	2008/09 Exits	2008/09 Total	2008/09 Interchanges
3,785,919	3,785,919	7,571,838	329,669

Close to a thousand people alighting from London trains can be truly frightening and it is astonishing that there are so few accidents. The introduction of a footbridge can only increase the likelihood. The Grade II listed status of Cambridge station limits options for overcoming the passenger congestion.

6.2 Where to locate a North Cambridge station

Despite the vast majority of rail travel being south of Cambridge (up to 50 carriages an hour in both directions), and only a small fraction of it being northwards (8-12 carriages an hour), all past proposals have assumed that the new station would be on the existing north-south mainline to Ely. However, the mainline offers no perfect location for a north Cambridge station as it does not pass through any area where a large number of people live or want to visit.

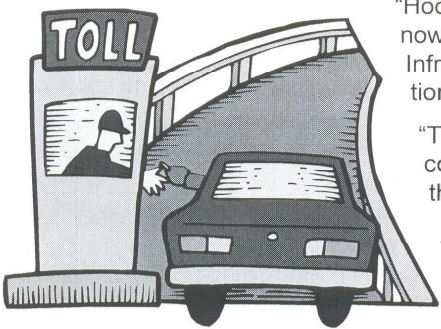
This means that Chesterton station has primarily been seen as a parkway station, as almost everyone using it would have to use a bus, taxi, car or cycle to access it.

The proposed Chesterton Interchange Station, with platforms on each side of the mainline and a bay platform on the western side, would be located at **Chesterton Sidings** on the part of the land used for stabling and loading freight trains by DB Schenker. This is close to the A14, with *some* houses and several caravan parks nearby. It is not in a prestigious area and is a considerable walking distance from the world-famous Cambridge Science Park and the adjacent Business Park, Innovation Centre etc.

The *only* advantage of this specific location is that it would allow passengers to travel directly to/from King's Lynn, Norwich, Peterborough and so on. However, a huge amount of work would be required to construct the station, build car parking, bus interchanges, guided busway extension, as well as relocate DB Schenker's sidings. The work would cause considerable disruption to train services.

CAST.IRON is NOT opposed to the proposed station at Chesterton Sidings. Indeed, it fully supports it. However, the cost is currently £24m and is certain to rise and it will not open until at least 2015/6, and politicians, including the ruling Conservatives (see cutting below – ref 3) say it will not happen:

Congestion Charging is dead.



“Hooray for that” said Gerda. “The ill-conceived congestion charge is now dead and buried. The Government have scrapped the Transport Infrastructure Fund, thereby signalling the end to the hated congestion charge.”

“The Liberal Democrats are desperately trying to keep the idea of congestion charging alive. We Conservatives are delighted that this is the end of the road for the scheme”.

The downside to the scrapping of the Government scheme means that there will not be a new rail station at Chesterton sidings. “This is a pity” said Gerda. “Cambridge could have done with a rail station to the north of the city. It would have meant far less congestion getting to the existing rail station, particularly for south Cambridgeshire residents, and would have provided a much needed facility with easy access”.

Figure 1 - Conservative Party Campaign Literature April 2010 (Gerda Covell, Milton Conservatives)

CAST.IRON believes that a much simpler station can be built very quickly, which could be an *alternative* station, an *interim* station or a *complementary* station. CAST.IRON believes it should be a *permanent* station.

CAST.IRON proposes that a new terminus station be built on the remaining stub of the Cambridge - St. Ives railway line very close to **Milton Road**. This would be right next to the Cambridge Business Park and less than 50 metres from the Science Park entrance – it is shown on the *right hand side* below:

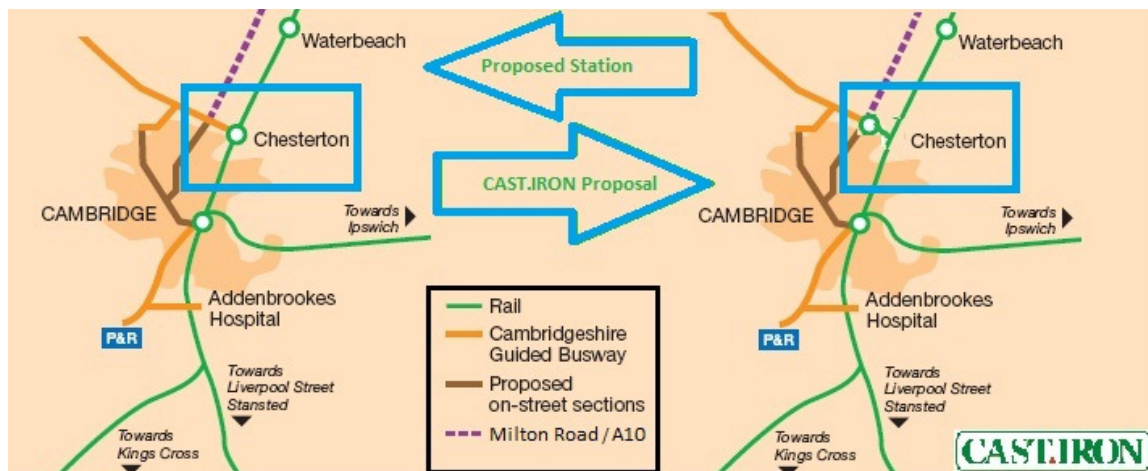
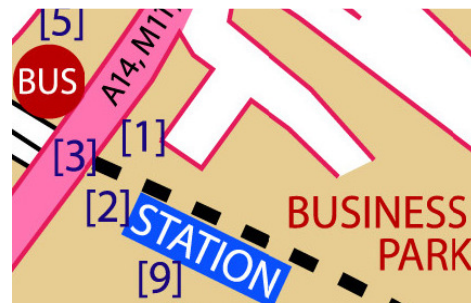


Figure 2 - Location of north Cambridge station – ‘Sidings’ station (left) / Milton Road station (right)

CAST.IRON cannot claim credit for suggesting the Milton Road location. It was Cambridgeshire County Council’s rail consultant Jeremy Thorne of Atkins Rail, who suggested this at the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway public inquiry in September 2004, whilst he was giving evidence against CAST.IRON’s rail proposals. He suggested a *cross-road* interchange (either side of Milton Road) between the franchised electrified trains and CAST.IRON’s diesel trains to avoid lowering the level crossing barriers on Milton Road. CAST.IRON had originally proposed a *cross-platform* interchange the Science Park (western) side



7. COMPARING THE TWO STATION LOCATIONS

Chesterton Sidings	Milton Road – Close to Level Crossing
Close to a few houses, industrial buildings and caravan parks	Close to Science Park, Business Park, St. John's Innovation Centre
Long distance from built up area	Next to Milton Road – major road in Cambridge
Few passengers would walk to station – not a pleasant or safe walk along Cowley Road	Thousands of residents and workers (and business visitors) within a 10-minute walk
No bus stops – needs new bus service	Within 20 to 80 metres of four bus stops
Would require extension to guided busway	No additional bus infrastructure required
Requires new car parking facilities	Former Cowley Road Park & Ride could be used
Major station development – multiple platforms, foot bridges etc.	Minimal station infrastructure, and little impact on operational railway to construct.

This map shows Milton Road station in the top left-hand corner, which joins the Business Park, is only 30 metres across the road to the Science Park, and just 20, 40, 45 and 80 metres from bus stops. The Cambridge Regional College is to the left of the Science Park just off the map – about 10 minutes' walk.

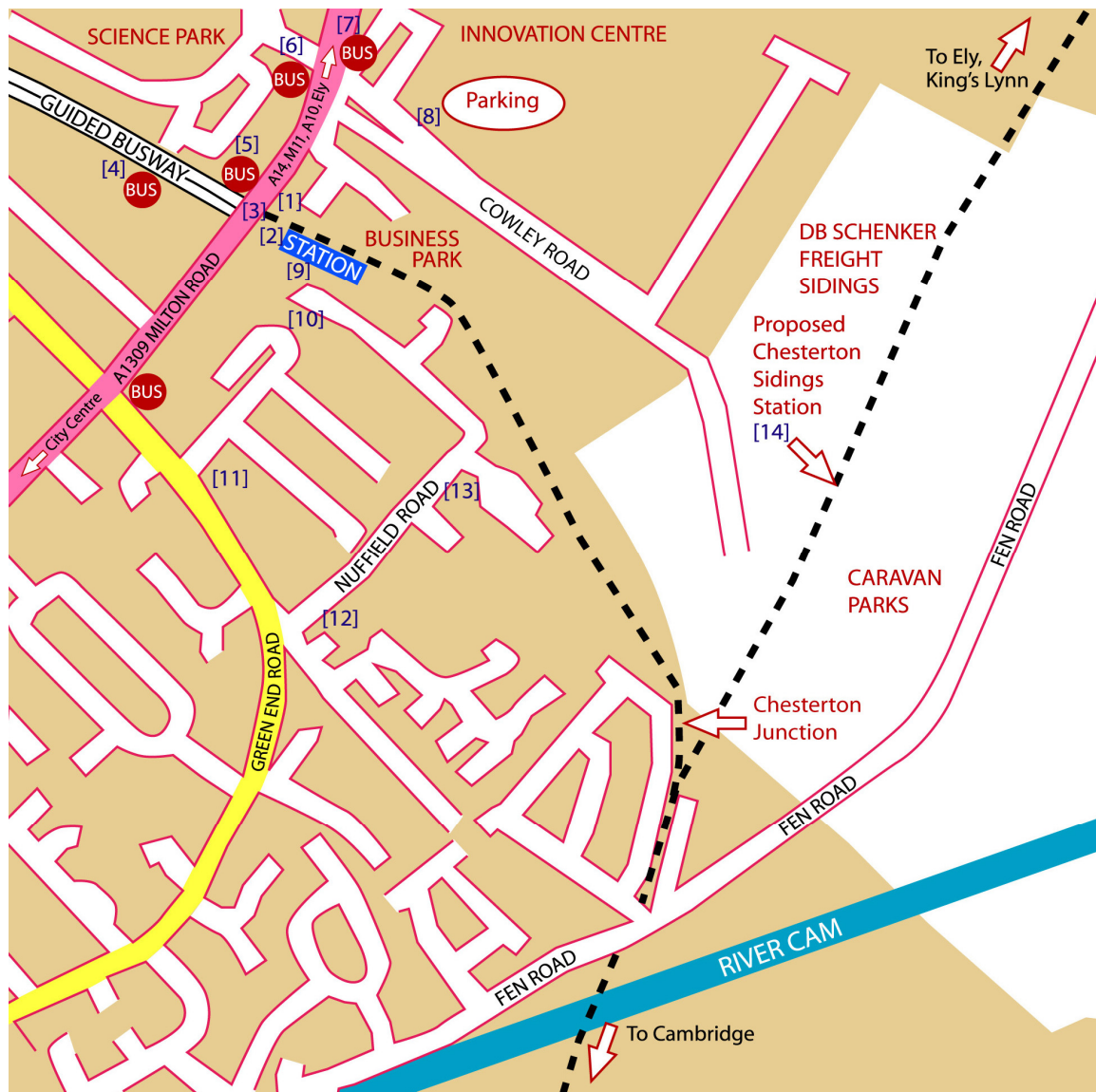


Figure 3 – Location of station, buses, car parking, business locations, and road access to station

Map by Sean Baker, commissioned by CAST.IRON – (c) CAST.IRON 2010

8. CAST.IRON'S PROPOSAL FOR A RADICALLY RETHOUGHT NORTH CAMBRIDGE STATION

CAST.IRON proposes that the railway line between Chesterton Junction and Milton Road level crossing be reopened, and that a station platform be built as close to the former level crossing as is practicable, to minimise the walking distance to the places that people want to visit.

CAST.IRON cannot stress highly enough that patronage will be increased where people realise a station exists – because they can see it every time they pass by – rather than a station 'in the middle of nowhere'.

8.1 Station Facilities

Just over 1km of single-track railway would need to be laid and a single platform of at least four carriages constructed. Fencing would need to be strengthened.

Although the line could be served exclusively by diesel trains (either with dedicated stock or by utilising spare capacity of the Stansted, Ipswich, Norwich and Peterborough trains), it makes sense for electric trains from London to terminate at Milton Road station. Therefore the line would need to be electrified from Chesterton Junction. For maximum operational flexibility the station could be 8 carriages long.

Lighting, shelters, ticket machines (bus+rail), CCTV, help points etc. would need to be provided, along with the necessary access routes. A ticket office and heated waiting room could optionally be provided.

8.2 Station Feasibility

8.2.1 Trackbed

The trackbed to Milton Road level crossing, which was last used by heavy sand trains in 1992, has not been built on. There are no bridges, culverts, embankments, cuttings or crossings on this section.

In November 2006 Network Rail sold the entire Fen Drayton (aka Cambridge-St. Ives) branch to Cambridgeshire County Council for conversion to the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway. However, the busway has only been built as far as the western side of Milton Road level crossing. The eastern side of to the junction is intended to be converted to a busway when the station at Chesterton Sidings is constructed. The railway track was lifted at the end of 2006.

Cambridgeshire County Council and Network Rail could decide how to manage the line ownership.

If the Chesterton sidings station is abandoned then the full railway reserve will be available. However, CAST.IRON recommends laying track on the southern half of the two-track formation so that the guided busway could be constructed on the northern half.

CAST.IRON has not studied the condition of the trackbed since November 2003 and therefore it is unable to comment on the quality of the formation or the drainage of the trackbed. However, inspection by CAST.IRON's civil engineer at the time did not identify any issues.



Figure 4 - Trackbed viewed from Milton Road

8.2.2 Connection to Network

The branch is still operationally connected to the network, with rails cut and a fence erected. In fact, the branch is connected by a turnout on the sidings, which is locked out of use. This means that the mainline point work is in regular use by freight trains. Network Rail would need to assess whether the points would need to be replaced to support passenger operations. The sidings are fully signalled.

The turnout on the siding towards Milton Road would need to be replaced. Since the branch became freight only in 1970 it was operated as a 'long siding' with train-man operated level crossing gates. The only signal was at the sidings, which is still operational and is controlled at Cambridge power signal box.

8.2.3 Electrification

There are no clearance, foot crossing or power issues to prevent the branch being electrified. The branch is south of the Milton substation and therefore is not subject to the limited power supply that constrains the network just north of the proposed Chesterton Sidings station.

8.2.4 Track

Because the short branch will be a terminus, it is unlikely that trains would exceed 30mph. This would allow Network Rail to use second-hand rail and other recycled materials.

8.2.5 Station Facilities

The station could utilise the same facilities as Cambridgeshire County Council has used for its guided busway stops (such as the cycle shelters – shown right). This consistency would confirm the appearance of integrated transport and may reduce costs.

The guided busway has CCTV and help points at all stops. The County Council may wish to consider operating the CCTV at the station. However, help points and ticketing should remain the responsibility of the train operator.



Figure 5 - Busway Cycle Racks

8.2.6 Station Access

Many passengers would enter/exit from the station at Milton Road. There is still an underpass to the east of Milton Road that was originally used by cars when the level crossing gates were closed but has been used by pedestrians and cyclists for decades. The photos show it from the north (left – [1] on map) and south (right – [2] on map).



The bridge is at rail track height. The underpass is sloping, and is at its lowest under the bridge.

Cambridgeshire County Council requires the bridge to remain (albeit replaced) for guided buses to operate and therefore the underpass would need to be kept. However, the land next to the underpass could be raised up to the level of the railway track, thus providing a perfectly flat route to the station from both north and south, thus meeting DDA requirements with no steps required.

There are numerous traffic lights on Milton Road and there is already a pedestrian crossing for the Science Park.

CAST.IRON believes it is vital that interchange between the guided buses and trains uses the shortest possible route and therefore the traffic lights at the former level crossing used to give priority to guided buses going into Cambridge would need to be modified to allow pedestrians to cross as well.

The photo (right) shows the junction of the busway on Milton Road with the railway line behind the metal fence on the other side of the road.



Figure 6 - Busway exit onto Milton Road



Figure 7 – from Science Park

The stops on the busway are about 90 seconds' walk to Milton Road. CAST.IRON suggests that the stops could be moved closer to Milton Road to reduce the walk to the station – not just to save a few seconds but to allow pedestrians to cross Milton Road at the same time as the bus to avoid another cycle of the traffic lights.

By comparison, the bus stop in front of the Science Park is immediately opposite the start of the underpass (see photo on left).

It is also important that people can access the station without having to go to Milton Road.

CAST.IRON proposes that the northern edge of the railway formation is converted into a path, and this will link to each of the buildings on the Cambridge Business Park, including the BBC, which would be closest to the station.

It must also be possible to access the station from the residential areas on the southern side of the railway line. CAST.IRON proposes that a path be created from Nuffield Road to the station. This would require a small strip of land to be taken from the edge of one business on the northern side of Nuffield Road (Robert Davies Court – [9] on the map). Very conveniently there is a footpath (see photo on right – [10] on the map) from the southern side of Nuffield Road into Green Park.

It would be possible to provide car parking on the southern side of the station by using Nuffield Road (from Green End Road). It is an industrial area and additional car traffic would not be a major intrusion to residents. This could also be a location for a taxi rank and disabled parking spaces.

However, the station will attract fewer cars from the south (i.e. Cambridge itself) than from the north (i.e. outside Cambridge).



8.2.7 Car Parking

One of the major expenses of the proposed Chesterton sidings station was the provision of parking for many hundreds of cars.

Milton Road station will also need car parking. Fortunately, there is a major car park at the nearby Cowley Road, about two minutes' walk from the station. This is the former bus Park and Ride, which has moved to north of Milton. The site is now closed to the public (see photo of gates on right – [8] on map) and is used by Stagecoach buses. It could easily be reopened, perhaps exclusively for rail users, with combined rail/parking ticket machines. Parking enforcement may also be required at the private car parks of offices on the business park.



Figure 8 - Front gates of former Cowley Road Park and Ride

9. URGENCY

Delays to Chesterton station have been embarrassing. Both NXEA and FCC franchises (even if they went to full term in 2014 and 2015 respectively) would have ended before the station was opened.

CAST.IRON's proposal for a Milton Road station could go exactly the same way. However, its major advantage is that it really can be built cheaply because very little of it involves change to the operational railway. The only time that the live railway would be affected is to renew any pointwork, adjust any signalling (and signage) and to link up overhead electric wires (OLE).

In 2011 Cambridge station will be closed on several weekends to construct the island platforms in time for the December 2011 opening. This will involve turning off the OLE. If the work for Milton Road station is planned to utilise these scheduled possessions then impact on the railway could be negligible.

One of the major costs of any rail enhancements in the privatised railway is the cost of disruption, paying penalties to train operators and providing for rail substitute buses. This can all be avoided if the go-ahead for a Milton Road station is given in 2010 and construction occurs in 2011.

10. COST OF SCHEME

Nothing on the railway is cheap. However, CAST.IRON believes that work done on non-operational land is much cheaper than on the operational railway.

Between 2003 and 2006 CAST.IRON tried to buy the Cambridge to St. Ives railway line to reopen it for passenger services, and therefore it has considerable knowledge of how cheap railways can be. For example, it received quotations – which it deposited with the busway public inquiry – of £4.8m to relay the track on the entire 12-mile railway line.

If the railway line were re-laid and a simple station built, along with providing access to the station, CAST.IRON believes that it could be opened for as little as **£3 million** – compared with £24 million. This cost is likely to be *less* than the construction of the guided busway extension along this route.

11. PATRONAGE, SERVICES ETC.

11.1 Patronage

According to Section 2.16 of the May 2007 business case for Chesterton Sidings station [ref 5] "Direct demand modelling has forecast the total number of passengers (boarders) in one day to be approximately 2,630." Assuming the same number passengers alighting this would be a total of 5,260 per day. The business case proposes (section 2.17) a multi-storey car park for 400 cars.

Milton Road will not capture passengers north of Chesterton but as a station local to where people live and work it will be more attractive; and Cowley Road park and ride would only be an extra minute's walk to the station. CAST.IRON suggests, with reason it believes, that as there is a high benefit-cost ratio for a station costing £24m, Milton Road station's much lower capital cost would also generate a high BCR.

As stated above, CAST.IRON has identified the former (but still available) Milton Road Park and Ride site as providing ideal car parking for Milton Road station. This will offer:

- a) an alternative to Cambridge station, thereby helping to relieve pressure there
- b) the opportunity for existing out of town car commuters to park their car and continue their journey by train - both for those who work in Cambridge and beyond

The guided busway route has a parallel cycle track, allowing cyclists easy access to the station.

CAST.IRON has not made any attempt to evaluate patronage for a station at Milton Road, but from its previous work in 2003/4 preparing a case for the re-instatement of the rail service on the former line from Cambridge - St. Ives line, the following significant sources of customers were identified.

1. Cambridge Science Park.

Approximately 5,000 people work at the Science Park for over 100 companies (Science Park web site). As well as travel to and from work, many of these people have a need to travel to other locations - London, elsewhere in UK and overseas. There is also considerable inbound visitor traffic, both domestic and overseas. There is currently a Cambridgeshire County Council initiative looking at the provision of a dedicated bus services linking the Science Park to Cambridge rail station as a response to concerns about effective access.

2. Cambridge Regional College

There are approximately 20,000 full and part-time students studying at Cambridge Regional College who come from a 65km radius covering Cambridge and its surrounding villages, eastern Bedfordshire, northern Essex and western Suffolk (Cambridge Access Validating Agency web site). The college spends over £550,000 per annum supporting an extensive bus network to bring students to the college - 636 students use the bus each day.

The CRC's travel plan (<http://www.camre.ac.uk/Documents/Single-Site/Green%20Travel%20Plan.pdf>) suggests that the bus link from the College to Cambridge station takes 40 minutes at present. The train from Milton Road to the station would take around 5 minutes and would then increase accessibility to significant higher numbers of students who are currently put off studying at CRC by the difficult journey.

CAST.IRON held informal meetings with both organisations in 1 and 2 above during its efforts to re-open the railway and received positive feedback about the need for a rail-based solution.

3. Current and proposed new residential developments along the course of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway (CGB).

A major new town has been planned for some time at Northstowe, and will be served by the CGB. It has been suggested that Northstowe residents will work either in the new town or in Cambridge.

Previous experience (Cambourne) has suggested though that this settlement will be very attractive to commuters, both to Stansted Airport and London, especially given the proximity of the proposed town to the A14/M11 corridor. A station at Milton Road, linking with the CGB, will open up a realistic sustainable alternative travel option and reduce pressure on the road network.

11. 2 Services

The success of Milton Road station will be dependent on how well the train operators serve the station.

Whilst the station can clearly be included in the Greater Anglia franchise, which is due to commence on 1st April 2011, it will only be truly successful if it is also served by First Capital Connect, which is likely to remain the operator until 2015. Its franchise requires it to serve Chesterton Sidings station.

If FCC refused to serve the Milton Road station, the DfT could change the franchise to require it to do so. FCC's franchise has break points and the DfT could use this to adjust the train requirement.

Opening the new station may cause the train timetables to be altered to allow trains to go to Milton Road, turn around there and return to Cambridge. It should add four minutes in each direction. A small disadvantage with Milton Road is that it will take more than a minute extra in each direction to serve the station compared to Chesterton Sidings.

CAST.IRON believes that it may make sense for First Capital Connect to continue to split its trains at Cambridge but then allow both portions to go forward, one to Waterbeach/Ely and the other to Milton Road. These could be timetabled to leave as closely behind one another as possible to get the most out of the paths available.

CAST.IRON believes that additional services from Cambridge will be introduced in the future, e.g. to Stratford and to Stansted. This would increase the number of services to/from Milton Road.

It would be easy for diesel trains to extend their route to go to Milton Road and back (for example, Ipswich-Cambridge-Milton Road-Cambridge-Ipswich and likewise for trains to Norwich). This reversal at Cambridge would provide a direct service from Milton Road, which might seem inefficient but similar reversals occur at Ely and Sheffield (e.g. Norwich-Liverpool). However, CAST.IRON recognises that it may not be possible to achieve this and efficiently meet the required clock-face timetable in all cases.

12 WHAT HAPPENS TO MILTON ROAD STATION IF CHESTERTON SIDINGS OPENS LATER

If Chesterton Sidings station eventually goes ahead then Milton Road could be deemed surplus to requirements and closed. CAST.IRON hopes that this would not be the case as it has distinct advantages over the remote Sidings station. CAST.IRON also believes that closure would meet with a public protest. However, closure would depend on whether train operators continued to serve it.

The proposed Chesterton Sidings station would have had a bay platform for turning trains around. CAST.IRON believes that Milton Road station could be used instead of that bay. However, it may be necessary to build a new through platform at Chesterton Junction to allow passenger interchanges.

Another option would be to retain the Milton Road branch for *connecting* shuttle services only. This could utilise Parry People Mover vehicles, as is used on the 1km-long Stourbridge branch line in the West Midlands. This would have very low operating costs and would be environmentally friendly. There would be sufficient land on the branch to erect a vehicle maintenance depot, as has been done at Stourbridge. If the line were only used by PPMs then the OLE would be dewired.

CAST.IRON sees Milton Road as a *permanent* station, but hopefully a *complementary* one.

DOCUMENT REFERENCES

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CAST.IRON was formed in July 2003 to reopen the then mothballed railway line from Cambridge to Fen Drayton and reinstate the track to St. Ives (Cambs).

CAST.IRON is often referred to as a rail campaigning group, similar to organisations such as *Railfuture*, however, it intended to raise the finance to reopen the line and manage the passenger services itself.

In August 2003 CAST.IRON wrote to Network Rail to offer to buy the railway line for a six-figure sum. This bid was unsuccessful as Cambridgeshire County Council intended to submit a Transport and Works Act Order application to convert the line to a guided busway.

As there was considerable doubt that the guided busway plan would succeed, CAST.IRON progressed with the detailed design and costings of its scheme in readiness to resubmit its bid to acquire the line should the busway fail to go ahead. It maintained a relationship with Network Rail to achieve this aim and a company, CAST.IRON Rail Ltd. (since dissolved), was formed to take over the St. Ives line.

In December 2005 the busway was awarded a TWA Order; on 30th June 2006 it was awarded funding from the government and on 18th July 2006 county councillors voted to proceed. The line was sold by Network Rail in November 2006 and construction commenced soon after. The busway is not yet open.

CAST.IRON's management, which consists of professionals from business and the rail industry, continues to monitor the progress of the guided busway and to look for opportunities to promote other viable rail schemes.

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