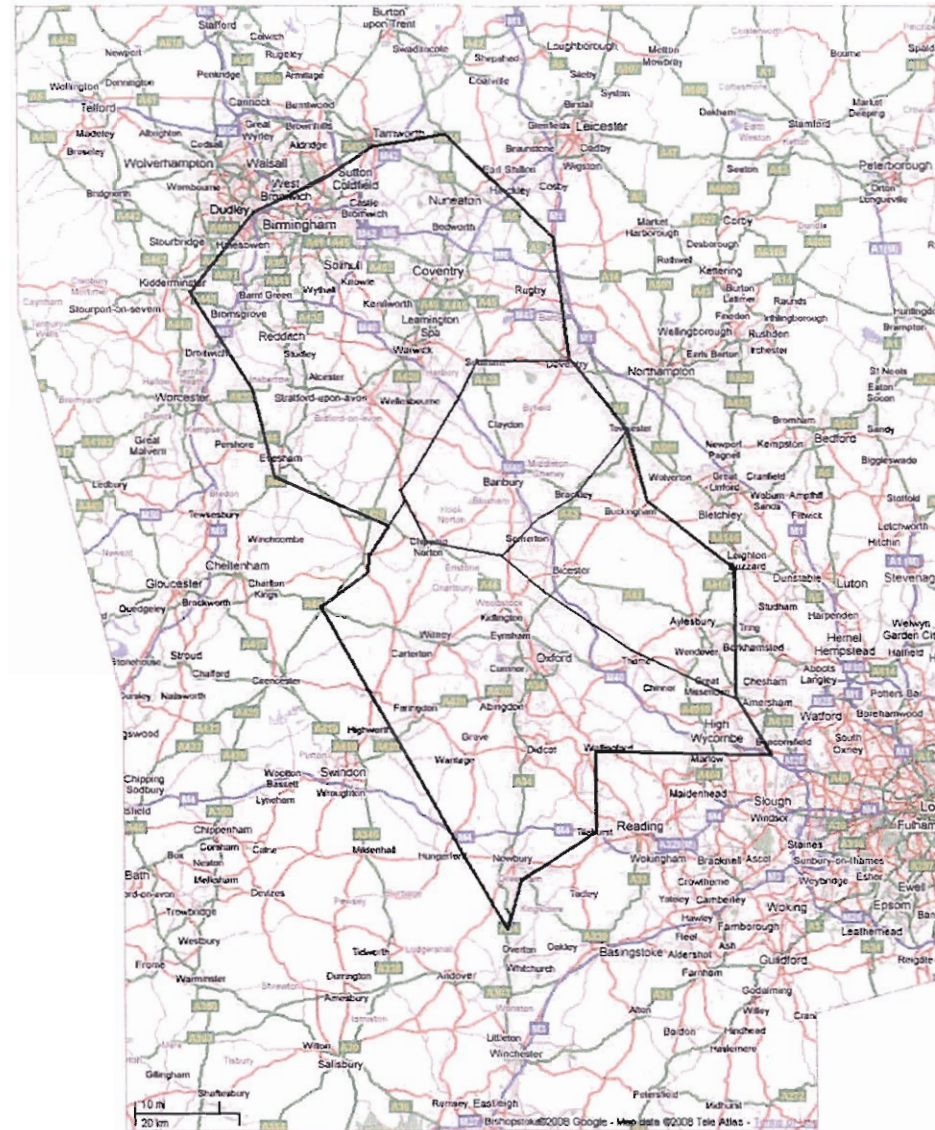


# PROJECT EVERGREEN PHASE 3

## PARKWAY STATION SITE SELECTION REPORT



**OCTOBER 2009**

**Chiltern Railways**

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## 1. Strategic Brief (CRCL)

### 1.1 Project Evergreen Phase 3

Evergreen 3 is being specified to deliver:

- a significant reduction in journey times across the route, with the objective of achieving a reduction in the order of 30 minutes on our Marylebone to Birmingham Moor Street schedules
- expansion of the Chiltern route to more effectively serve the significant market for rail travel in Oxfordshire – by building a quarter of a mile chord line at Bicester, upgrading the route from there to Oxford, and constructing en route a new parkway station, to serve north Oxford and West Oxfordshire; and a much improved station at Bicester Town to serve the A34/M40 corridor. Journey times from London of around 66 minutes to Oxford are anticipated
- an ongoing momentum of improvement to the route's capability: to sustain the current high performance levels whilst carrying more trains, and to facilitate Network Rail's welcome moves towards a 7 day per week railway

In Oxfordshire specifically, the project will:

- create choice and opportunity to grow the rail market: large parts of west Oxfordshire are poorly served by rail: the train service on the Cotswold Line is poor, and road access to Oxford station is difficult
- provide a strategic alternative for Oxford-London passengers, which will be particularly useful during the seven year duration remodelling of Reading station, and the construction of Crossrail onto the Great Western Main Line

The service is intended to compliment, and not replace, the existing FGW service between Paddington and Oxford.

### 1.2 Chiltern Railways to Oxford

The proposal to open up the market for rail travel by operating Chiltern Railways services to Oxford comprises:

- the creation of a new quarter of a mile piece of railway near Bicester linking the Chiltern route to the Oxford-Bicester Town line;
- an upgrade of around 10 miles of line between Bicester and Oxford by reinstatement of double track, resignalling for 5 minute headways, abolition of most level crossings, and a linespeed of 90 to 100 mph;
- a significant upgrade of the existing station at Bicester Town to integrate it with the adjacent Bicester Village shopping complex, extend its platforms, and reinstate a second platform (given that the route through it will be double track);

- a new parkway station to the north of Oxford;
- the creation of an independent access route into the disused parcels bays at Oxford station

A Transport & Works Act (T&WA) Order is required from the Secretary of State for Transport to enable the assembly of land and operating permissions for the section between Bicester and Oxford. Options reports are being developed for each station so that Chiltern Railways can begin to consult local stakeholders as part of the T&WA process.

### 1.3 A Parkway Station

The aims of a new parkway station are:

- to improve access to the rail network for people in north Oxford
- to connect with existing bus services linking to the Radcliffe Hospitals complex and other destinations into Oxford
- to improve access to the rail network for a swathe of north and west Oxfordshire which is not currently well served by rail
- to relieve the pressure on Oxfordshire's strategic road network and in particular the A34.

## 2 Bicester Parkway

### 2.1 Context

Oxfordshire County Council has proposed a “Bicester Parkway” station near junction 9 of the M40, to siphon traffic going TO Oxford away from the A34. There are existing congestion and queuing problems on the A34 itself and at the junction between the A34 and the Oxford Ring Road.

### 2.2 Benefits

- Direct access from the M40 for passengers wishing to access London and Oxford
- Congestion relief on the A34 by taking car users off the road

### 2.3 Constraints

- The A34/M40 junction is already severely congested and the Highways Agency has expressed serious concerns in relation to future capacity
- There are no existing bus services to connect into the station
- FROM Oxford traffic not dealt with by a Parkway station in this location

### 3 Weston Otmoor Station

#### 3.1 Context

Weston Otmoor is a proposed new “ecotown” being developed by Parkridge Holdings UK with 15,000 “ecostyle” houses planned for greenbelt land near Weston-on-the-Green in Oxfordshire. The developer also proposes a new Weston Otmoor Railway Station close to the A34, providing connections between heavy and light rail systems and a proposed Park and Ride facility accessed directly from the M40 Junction 9. The station needs to be capable of handling 10,000 passenger movements in each peak.

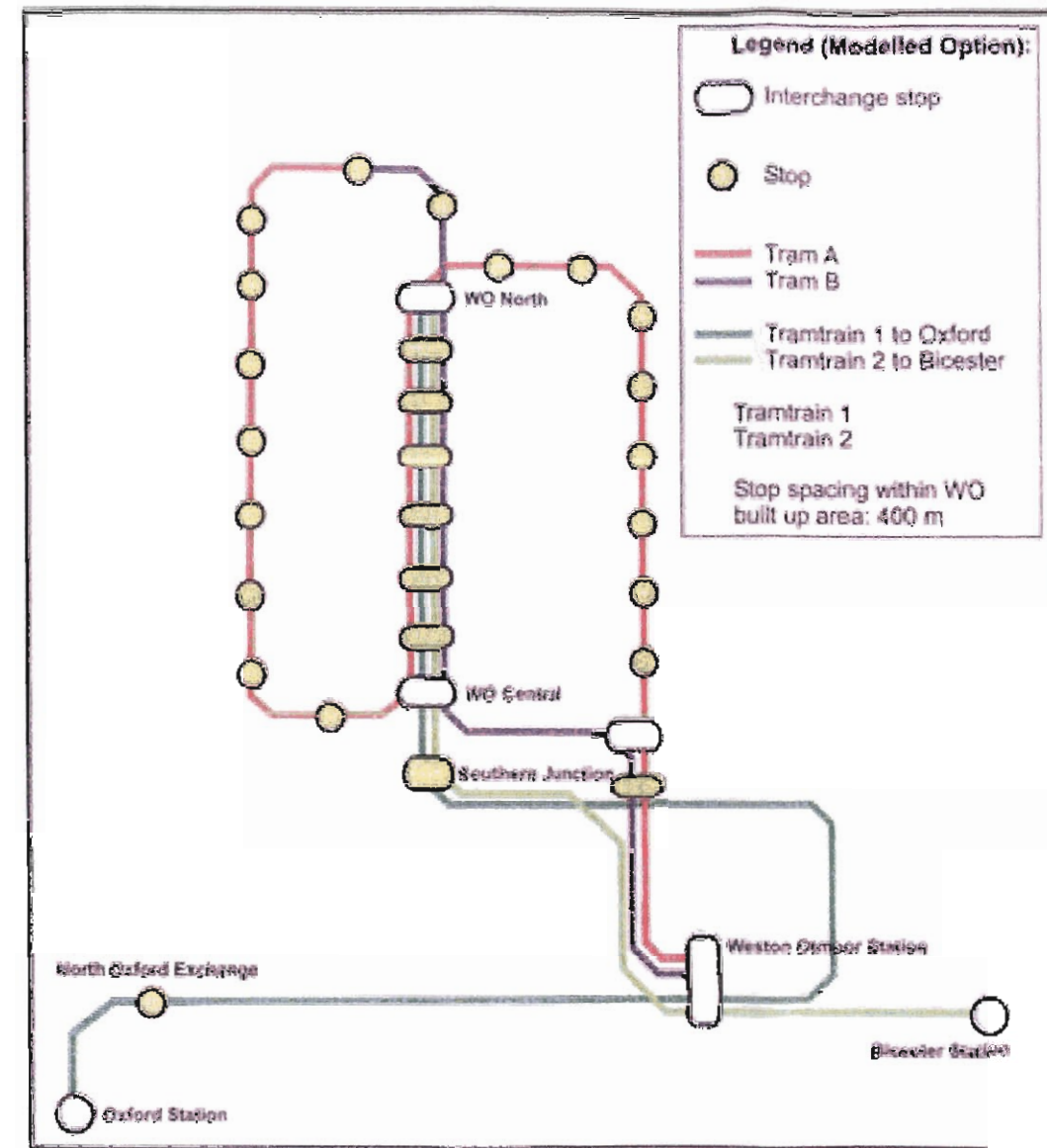
#### 3.2 Benefits

- Bicester Parkway Station would allow easy access from the M40 for passengers wishing to access London and Oxford
- The developers say that the ecotown will be entirely car-free with trams running throughout
- A fast and frequent rail service from a new Weston Otmoor Park and Ride Station is also proposed to Oxford, Bicester, Milton Keynes and London via the East-West Rail line
- The developers also state that existing car travellers heading to Oxford along the congested A34 will be able to park at West Otmoor Station and continue their journey by train; the Park and Ride would have a capacity for 6000 cars

#### 3.3 Constraints

- There are no existing bus services to connect into the station
- FROM Oxford traffic not dealt with by a Parkway station at this location
- Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council have prepared a joint report in response to the CLG consultation on ecotowns and specifically with regard to the Weston Otmoor proposal (24 June 2008). It contains varied concerns about the proposal:
  - The development is inappropriate on Green Belt and would not normally be permitted
  - The site is adjacent to the strategic road network (A34 and M40). However the A34/M40 junction is already severely congested and the Highways Agency has expressed serious concerns in relation to future capacity. Its location adjacent to the intersection of two major routes could create/maintain high levels of demand for car based journeys
  - Upgrade of Oxford station required to accommodate volume of passengers anticipated
  - Rail proposals within the scheme have not been validated by any of the rail authorities, therefore there is no knowledge as to whether the critical rail infrastructure and services are fundable, deliverable and workable in perpetuity

- Parkridge is not a Train Operating Company and has no history of delivering such schemes



## 4. Water Eaton Park and Ride / Oxford Halt

### 4.1 Context

The site is located at a disused Grain Silo building, to the north is the A34 and railway line, the A4165 runs to the west. The railway sidings are used as an aggregates depot. Immediately south of the Grain Silo is the Water Eaton Park and Ride facility that accommodates 800 car parking spaces. The site is surrounded by agricultural land.

Access is gained from the A4165 which leads to the A34 to the north and the A40/Oxford City centre to the South.

### 4.2 Benefits

- Access to rail for north and east Oxford and West Oxfordshire (Woodstock, Witney and beyond)
- Local station for Kidlington and other nearby villages
- Avoids key congested areas on the A34 such as Junction 9 of the M40 and the roundabout at Peartree
- Bus service every 15 minutes (12 minute journey time) to and from Oxford City Centre
- Bus service every 15 minutes (15-20 minute journey time) to Radcliffe Hospital Complex
- Buses travelling on the A4260 to and from Kidlington could drop passengers at the station if the station is at the same height as this road
- Park and ride railhead for travellers FROM Oxford to London, not TO Oxford
- The land between the railway and the Park and Ride site is a Brownfield site but it is all contained within a Green Belt area. A limited area exists for a station and parking outside of the Grain Silo and railway stone terminal;
- Space for additional parking is available but it would have to be decked to avoid landtake extending into the Green Belt
- The railway archway under the A4260 is probably wide enough for 3 tracks, or 2 tracks and a platform. A staggered layout, with the Down platform mostly on the west side of the bridge, may minimise the impacts on the stone terminal

### 4.3 Constraints

- Under the Non Statutory Cherwell Local Plan the entire area is washed over by Green Belt

- Planning permission was granted to Grundons in September 2007 (07/01857/CM) for a waste reduction and material recovery facility with ancillary works
- The railway stone terminal must remain operational. This currently partly occupies the old Down line formation. Reinstatement of the latter will effectively shift the terminal towards the waste depot boundary, thus constraining the room for cranes and lorries to move
- Any extension of the Park and Ride bus lane to make train/bus interchange more direct is likely to be resisted by bus operators, due to the extra operating mileage costs they would incur
- TO Oxford traffic not dealt with by a station at this site but Bicester Town station could take TO Oxford traffic



## 5. Peartree Park and Ride

### 5.1 Context

Peartree Park and Ride site is located off the A34 between Gosford and Wolvercote in a greenbelt area. The site is adjacent to residential areas, a lake and a golf club; the site is within the City of Oxford.

Parkridge, the developers of Weston Otmoor Ecotown, propose a new North Oxford Exchange halt station adjacent to Peartree Park & Ride (although accessed off Linkside Avenue) where trams to Oxford from Weston Otmoor will stop and passengers can connect with heavy rail and shuttle buses to east Oxford and Oxford Station, then on to central Oxford.

### 5.2 Benefits

- Direct access off the A40 from Witney and West Oxfordshire
- A 12 minute bus journey into the centre of Oxford that operates every 8-10 minutes
- Land exists that could be used for expansion on the south side of the railway
- Potential link to Parkridge scheme with connection to trams between Weston Otmoor and Oxford

### 5.3 Constraints

- Access from Kidlington and Yarnton involves the congested A34 roundabout
- Slightly less direct access from the Oxford ring road
- No bus service to Radcliffe Hospital Complex
- Surrounding area is green belt
- Railway land is narrow at this point and is beginning to go into a cutting on the south side
- The railway backs onto residential land

## 6 Islip

### 6.1 Context

The village of Islip is located on the B4027, south east of the A34, and is served by an existing rail station. Islip is a small, prosperous commuter village and its station serves commuters, predominantly, to Oxford and London. The existing facilities consist of an unstaffed halt with limited free parking that serves one three-car platform.

The existing platform is on the site of the old down line and therefore it will be moved in the village direction to make way for new track to become the Oxford-bound platform. A new platform will be built on the other side to serve London-bound trains.

Oxfordshire County Council has suggested that Chiltern Railways review its proposal to expand the existing station at Islip into a new park and ride interchange.

### 6.2 Benefits

- Direct access from the B4207 Bletchington Road from the A34, so it could be used as a park-and-ride railhead for traffic TO Oxford
- Former oil depot site adjacent to the station on the Up side of the railway could be utilised to create a new park and ride interchange

### 6.3 Constraints

- Convoluted journey makes this an unattractive railhead for traffic FROM Oxford and Bicester
- Potential road traffic implications
- The village of Islip is in a conservation area; this abuts but does not include the station, however planning issues may well be an issue
- No knowledge of owner's (Ministry of Defence) plans for former oil depot site



## **7 Bicester Town**

### **7.1 Context**

Chiltern Railways has reviewed an option to re-site Bicester Town station and construct a Parkway station west of the A41 bridge near Bicester with a tunnel under the road to Bicester Village.

### **7.2 Benefits**

- Site is adjacent to A41 providing excellent road connections
- Good connections could be provided to Bicester Village
- Land available for station and expanse of car parking

### **7.3 Constraints**

- This location is very remote from Bicester Town Centre and Cherwell District Council are looking for a Bicester station that better serves the local community
- New road junctions required on the A41 that could prove to be costly and prohibitive in terms of approvals from the highways authorities

## 8 Oxfordshire Halts

### 8.1 Context

Oxfordshire used to have six halts that were built between Oxford and Bicester, opened in 1905, but then closed in the 1920s. All were unstaffed with tickets being sold by the conductor. Chiltern Railways has reviewed these sites in looking for a new Parkway Station:

- Port Meadow Halt or Summertown
- Wolvercote Halt
- Oddington Halt
- Charlton Halt
- Wendlebury Halt
- Oxford Road Halt

### 8.2 Constraints

Halt	Location	Constraints
Port Meadow or Summertown	Aristotle Lane crossing	On edge of urban area; parallel bus services more suited to local travel
Wolvercote	Under First Turn, just south of Wolvercote Tunnel	Parallel bus services so more suited to local travel; location in a cutting through a built up area would make it difficult to construct a mainline station here (original platforms were at rail level)
Oddington	Oddington Level Crossing	Over 1 mile from village
Charlton	4 miles east of Islip	Over 2 miles from village
Wendlebury	Langford Lane Crossing	Over 2 miles from village
Oxford Road Halt	Adjacent to Banbury Road on the site of Water Eaton Park & Ride	Please see Section 4 on Water Eaton Park and Ride site

## 9 Comparison Table

Parkway Site	Proximity to Target Markets	Access	Connections	Highways & Junctions	Railway Engineering & Operations	Planning & Development	Conclusion
Bicester Parkway	Serves north Oxfordshire but not west Oxfordshire or north Oxford. A Park and Ride railhead for travellers to Oxford not FROM Oxford	Close to A34 and M40	No current bus connections	Relieves A34 to Oxford but the A34/M40 junction is already severely congested. Future capacity issues	[Steve to comment]	Greenbelt land [ERM/Ardent to comment]	Does not serve all target markets; junctions issue; no local connections; planning & development issues
Weston Otmoor	Serves north Oxfordshire but not west Oxfordshire. Will serve north Oxford if tram system is introduced. A Park and Ride railhead for travellers to Oxford not FROM Oxford	Close to A34 and M40	No current bus connections. Local tram service to Oxford proposed	Councils' concern that 15,000 new dwellings located adjacent to the intersection of two major routes could create/maintain high levels of demand for car based journeys	[Steve to comment]	Proposed ecotown on greenbelt land with much local opposition  [ERM/Ardent to comment]	Does not serve all target markets; serious highways & junctions issues; no local connections unless tram system is introduced; planning & development issues
Water Eaton Park and Ride / Oxford Road Halt	Serves north and east Oxford and west Oxfordshire but not north Oxfordshire. A Park and Ride railhead for travellers FROM Oxford and west Oxfordshire not TO Oxford.	Direct access off the A4260 to Kidlington and other nearby villages; also close to the A44 and A40 to Woodstock, Witney and beyond	Already a Park and Ride site with bus connections to Oxford city centre and the Radcliffe Hospitals Complex	Avoids key congested areas on the A34 such as Junction 9 of the M40 and the Peartree roundabout	The railway arch under the A4260 is probably wide enough for 3 tracks, or 2 tracks and a platform. Essential that the stone terminal adjacent to the railway remains operational	Brownfield site within greenbelt area with planning permission for waste reduction and material recovery facility and ancillary works on site of disused Grain Silo building, adjacent to P&R. Space for station and decked parking exists.	Does not serve all target markets; good access from A4260, A44, A40 and avoids areas of congestion; existing bus connections to Oxford and John Radcliffe Hospitals Complex; some planning and development issues but local support
Peartree Park and Ride	Serves north and east Oxford and west Oxfordshire but not North Oxfordshire. A Park and Ride railhead for travellers FROM Oxford and west Oxfordshire not TO Oxford target markets	Direct access off the A40 from Witney and west Oxfordshire. Access from the Oxford ring road is slightly less direct	Already a Park and Ride site with bus connections to Oxford city centre but not to John Radcliffe Hospitals Complex. Could become new tram halt under Weston Otmoor proposal	Peartree roundabout on the A34 is a key congestion point which constrains access from Kidlington on the A4260 and Woodstock and Chipping Norton on the A44	Railway land is narrow at this point and is beginning to go into a cutting on the south side	Greenbelt area near residential areas, lake and golf course [ERM/Ardent to comment]	Does not serve all target markets; good access from A40 but not from A4260 and A44; existing bus connections to Oxford but not the Hospitals Complex; engineering issues; key planning and development issues

Parkway Site	Proximity to Target Markets	Access	Connections	Highways & Junctions	Railway Engineering & Operations	Planning & Development	Conclusion
Islip	Serves north Oxfordshire but not west Oxfordshire or north Oxford. A Park and Ride railhead for traffic TO Oxford but not FROM Oxford	Direct access from the B4207 Bletchingdon Road from the A34	[Put in bus routes]	Potential road traffic implications locally and on A34	[Steve to comment]	Village is in a conservation area and in green belt and these factors could cause planning issues. Former oil depot site adjacent to station on UP side of the railway could be utilised to create a new park and ride but no knowledge of owner MoD's plans for site [ERM/Ardent to comment]	Does not serve all target markets; direct access to Oxford from B4207 but not from Oxford. Potential traffic implications. Key planning issues
Relocated Bicester Town	Serves north Oxfordshire but not west Oxfordshire or north Oxford. Remote from Bicester town centre	Site is adjacent to A41. Good connections could be provided to Bicester Village	[Buses?]	New road junctions required on A41 could prove costly and prohibitive in terms of approvals	[Steve to comment]	Land available for station and expanse of car parking	Does not serve all target markets; the site is remote from town centre so does not serve local community so well. Good access from A41 if new road junctions constructed, however highways issues likely. Land available.
Port Meadow / Summertown	Serves North Oxford but not north and west Oxfordshire.	Difficult access from A4144 and A4165	Parallel bus services to Oxford. Buses to Radcliffe Hospitals Complex	Closest main roads are A4144 Woodstock Road and A4165 Banbury Road. [Allan – are these roads congested into Oxford?]	[Steve to comment]	Adjacent to school playing fields, residential areas, park and allotments on other side of railway. Limited land available for car park. [ERM/Ardent to comment]	Does not serve all target markets and would replicate local bus services. More suited to local travel.
Wolvercote	Serves all target markets as close to A40, A44 and A34	Difficult access from A40, A44 and A4144	Parallel bus services to Oxford. Buses to Radcliffe Hospitals Complex	Congestion issues on A34 and at the junction between the A34 and Oxford Ring Road	Location in a cutting through a residential area would make it difficult to construct a mainline station here (original platforms were at rail level)	Adjacent to residential areas. No land for car park. [ERM/Ardent to comment]	Would replicate local bus services so more suited to local travel; the location has severe engineering constraints, planning & development issues

Parkway Site	Proximity to Target Markets	Access	Connections	Highways & Junctions	Railway Engineering & Operations	Planning & Development	Conclusion
Oddington	Serves north Oxfordshire but not west Oxfordshire or north Oxford	Over a mile from Oddington village in an isolated position. Difficult access to/ from major arteries such as A34	Bus services from Bicester to Oxford and Murcott to Oxford connect here	Congestion issues on A34	[Steve to comment]	Greenbelt land [ERM/Ardent to comment]	Does not serve all of target market; access, planning & development issues
Charlton	Serves north Oxfordshire but not west Oxfordshire or north Oxford	Over two miles from Charlton village in an isolated position. Difficult access to/ from main arteries such as A34 and M40	Bus services from Bicester to Oxford and Murcott to Oxford connect here	Congestion issues on A34	[Steve to comment]	Greenbelt land [ERM/Ardent to comment]	Does not serve all of target market; access, planning & development issues
Wendlebury	Serves north Oxfordshire but not west Oxfordshire or north Oxford	Over two miles from Wendlebury village in an isolated position. Difficult access to/ from main arteries such as A41, A34 and M40	No bus services at halt but Oxford-Bicester service connects at Wendlebury village	Congestion issues on A34 and M40 Junction 9	[Steve to comment]	Greenbelt land and adjacent to site of Roman village [ERM/Ardent to comment]	Does not serve all of target market; access, planning & development issues

## 10 Conclusion

### 10.1 Water Eaton Park and Ride / Oxford Halt Site

Water Eaton Parkway is Chiltern Railways' preferred site for a park and ride railhead FROM Oxford serving north and East Oxford and West Oxfordshire. It complements Bicester Town as a park and ride railhead TO Oxford serving north Oxfordshire. This site's attraction is derived from its location at the heart of Oxford's strategic road network. The station is just off the main A40 road linking Oxford with the Cotswolds, with direct access from the A4165 for Kidlington and other local villages.

The new Parkway station will:

- improve access to the rail network for people in north Oxford – so avoiding the need for them to drive through the congested city centre to reach the existing poorly sited railway station
- take full advantage of the excellent existing park and ride bus service linking the station with the Radcliffe Hospitals complex. This enables car-free travel for the sizeable numbers who travel between the hospitals complex and London
- improve access to the rail network for a swathe of west Oxfordshire which is not currently well served by rail. Communities such as Kidlington, Woodstock, Chipping Norton, Carterton and Witney will be able to reach the station very conveniently, which with a journey time of under one hour to London will become an extremely attractive prospect
- avoid key congested areas on the A34 such as Junction 9 of the M40 and the roundabout at Peartree.

The piece of land between the park and ride and the railway is owned privately, although Oxfordshire County Council do own some strategically significant strips of land. There are two important town planning matters at the site:

- (i) the location is categorised as Green Belt. However, it is already home to a dual carriageway road, an aggregates terminal, and a substantial car park, so the site concerned is not prime green land. Planning policy guidance gives a helpful hand for the provision of park and ride facilities in the green belt (note also that Warwick Parkway station was given permission to be constructed in green belt)
- (ii) a planning application has been lodged by Grundons for the construction of a waste recycling facility on the centre of the site between the railway and the park and ride. However, Grundons do not own the land concerned.

The location of a parkway station at Water Eaton should replicate the success of Warwick Parkway and provide a parkway station for Oxford with an excellent service to London.

