

Statement of Case



**of
Bus Users UK Oxford Group**
in relation to the

Transport and Works Act 1992

Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) Rules 2006

The Chiltern Railways (Bicester to Oxford Improvements) Order

Public Enquiry

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Statement of Case

Contents

1.1	Bus Users UK	2
1.2	The author	2
2.1	Project Evergreen 3	2
3.1	Road and rail congestion	..	..	..	..	3
3.2	Road congestion around Water Eaton Parkway station	..	..	..	..	3
3.3	Road and rail congestion around Oxford station	..	..	..	..	5
3.4	Road congestion around Bicester Town station	..	..	..	..	6
3.5	London Road level crossing	..	..	..	..	7
4.1	Public rights of way	..	..	..	..	8
5.1	Mitigating noise from railway traffic	..	..	..	..	9
6.1	Sources	..	..	..	..	9

1.1 Bus Users UK

Bus Users UK is a non-statutory body, formerly the National Federation of Bus Users, founded in 1985 to represent bus passengers in the deregulation and privatisation of bus services outside London. It aims:

- To represent bus users in the discussion of public transport issues
- To increase passengers' influence on local and national decisions about bus services
- To develop good communication between bus companies and their passengers

Bus Users UK's work has been recognised by the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK such that it also has relations with most major bus companies (outside London, which has its own representation body) and with local authorities. Bus Users UK is not aligned with national or local government or any political party.

Bus Users UK is a partner in the Bus Appeals Body, founded to help passengers whose complaints about bus services have not been resolved satisfactorily. Bus Users UK organises Bus Users' Surgeries in town centres throughout Britain to enable passengers to address their concerns directly to bus company managers.

1.2 The author

Hugh Jaeger worked for London Transport from 1985 until 1997. His knowledge of transport and road safety includes 35 years' experience as a pedal cyclist, 25 years as a motorcyclist, serving as the British Motorcyclists' Federation's Oxfordshire representative since 2005 and chairman of Bus Users UK Oxford Group since 2008. He moved to Oxfordshire in 2000 and has lived in the city of Oxford since 2002.

2.1 Project Evergreen 3

Bus Users UK Oxford Group shares Chiltern Railways' objectives of increased rail capacity, improved rail access, sustainable alternatives to car use, facilitating the East West Rail Link,

extending the use of safe forms of transport with lower environmental impact, and facilitating the redevelopment of Oxford Station. The Group believes that Chiltern Railways' Project Evergreen 3 has the potential to help to achieve these objectives.

However, current Evergreen 3 proposal has a small number of defects that would tend to undermine some of these objectives. The Group objects to the proposal on each of the grounds set out below.

3.1 Road and rail congestion

For the next three sections please refer to the *Bus Links with Rail Passenger Catchment Areas* map accompanying this Statement of Case.

3.2 Road congestion around Water Eaton Parkway station

A considerable proportion of the passengers who would be attracted to use trains from Water Eaton Parkway station live in communities that have no bus link with Water Eaton. Unless new bus routes are added, these passengers will use private transport that will considerably increase road congestion, for example on the A40(T), A44(T), A4165 and A4260. Wolvercote Roundabout, Pear Tree Interchange and main roads approaching them are already chronically and acutely congested and could be particularly badly affected.

Buses to and from Water Eaton Park & Ride serve a small number of destinations:

- | | | |
|------------|---|----------------------|
| 500 | Summertown, Keble Road, Magdalen Street (limited stop) | <i>every 20 mins</i> |
| 700 | Summertown, New Marston, John Radcliffe Hospital, Gypsy Lane, Churchill Hospital, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Headington | <i>every 15 mins</i> |

Other destinations are served by buses passing Water Eaton on Oxford Road:

- | | | |
|------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 2 | Grovelands, Evans Lane, Summertown, Magdalen Street | <i>every 15 mins</i> |
| 2A | Grovelands, Summertown, Magdalen Street | <i>every 15 mins</i> |
| 2B | Lyne Mead, Grovelands, Summertown, Magdalen Street | <i>every 15 mins</i> |
| 2C | Oxford Airport, Lyne Mead, Grovelands, Summertown, Magdalen Street | <i>peak hours only</i> |
| 2D | Oxford Airport, Kidlington, Summertown, Magdalen Street | <i>peak hours only</i> |
| 7A | Grovelands, Summertown, Magdalen Street | <i>every 5-10 mins</i> |
| 7B | Kidlington High Street, Summertown, Magdalen Street | <i>every 15 mins</i> |
| 25 | Bicester, Weston-on-the-Green, Kirtlington, Bletchingdon, Gosford, Summertown, Magdalen Street | <i>5 journeys per day</i> |
| 25A | Bicester, Middleton Stoney, Heyford, Kirtlington, Bletchingdon, Gosford, Summertown, Magdalen Street | <i>hourly</i> |
| 59 | Banbury, Adderbury, Deddington, Steeple Aston, Tackley, Oxford Airport, Kidlington, Summertown, Magdalen Street | <i>hourly</i> |
| 59A | Banbury, Adderbury, Deddington, Steeple Aston, Duns Tew, Middle Barton, Tackley, Kidlington, Summertown, Magdalen Street | <i>4-5 journeys per day</i> |

- 94** Ambrosden, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Oddington, Islip, Gosford, Summertown, Magdalen Street
5 journeys per day
- S5** Bicester, Gosford, Summertown, Magdalen Street, Oxford Rail Station
every 20 mins
- X88** Silverstone, Brackley, Bicester, Summertown, Magdalen Street
4 journeys per day

Water Eaton is most frequently served by Oxford Bus Co and Stagecoach services linking various parts of Kidlington with Oxford (Magdalen Street) via Summertown. This includes a high proportion of Water Eaton’s potential passengers.

However, Chiltern Railways’ *Statement of Case* predicts that Water Eaton Parkway will attract traffic numerous other communities that have no bus link with Water Eaton. Chiltern’s Development Manager has stated to the author that the company will not provide bus services between these communities and Water Eaton.

Central Oxfordshire has several bus companies thriving in a competitive market. One or more of these operators may identify commercial opportunities to introduce bus routes to increase the number of communities linked with Water Eaton. However, Chiltern’s indicated *laissez-faire* does nothing to guarantee this. Unless such services are introduced, all these journeys will be by private transport.

Communities from which Chiltern expects to attract passengers to Water Eaton without a bus link include:

Place	Population	Miles	Buses per hour	
		to Water Eaton	to Water Eaton	to Oxford station
Begbroke	792	4	0	2
Bladon	753	6	0	0
Carterton ²	11,805	18	0	4-6
Cassington	710	4	0	0
Charlbury ¹	2,984	13	0	1
Eynsham ²	4,665	6	0	5-7
Hanborough ¹	2,617	8	0	1
Witney ²	22,765	12	0	4-6
Wolvercote	5,642	2	0	0
Woodstock	2,924	6	0	2
Yarnton	2,523	3	0	0
Total population	58,180			

1. Charlbury and Hanborough have their own stations on the Cotswold Line with direct services to and from London Paddington. The Cotswold Line’s traffic capacity is currently being increased to allow a more frequent and more reliable service. Chiltern Railways’ prediction that it will attract significant numbers of passengers from Charlbury and Hanborough therefore seems fanciful.
2. Four or more buses per hour link Carterton, Eynsham and Witney with Oxford rail station. Most of these routes are Stagecoach S-series services with very high-quality, high-comfort

new Stagecoach Gold buses. Unless competitive bus links with Water Eaton are introduced, bus users from these communities will either continue to use Oxford as a railhead or possibly switch to private transport to use Water Eaton.

Even without Charlbury and Hanborough the major population centres include over 52,000 people from these centres who would be attracted to use Water Eaton Parkway without the option of coming by bus. Carterton, Eynsham and Witney are included in this total, as potential rail passengers in those communities will include some who are not influenced by the availability of bus services. The population figures are from the 2001 Census, since which time the populations of Witney and Carterton have each increased by several thousand.

Park and ride reduces car dependency where it attracts drivers from communities that are too small to support a viable bus service. However, where park and ride attracts drivers from larger communities it generates car journeys that should and could be replaced by a bus service.

Elsewhere Chiltern Railways has shown exemplary commitment to providing bus links to railway stations, most notably with local taxi-buses to Bicester North. Chiltern's *laissez-faire* approach to the same issue at Water Eaton seems inexplicable and unacceptable.

3.3 Road and rail congestion around Oxford station

Chiltern claims that Water Eaton Parkway station will reduce pressure on Oxford railway station. While it is true that Water Eaton will take over some of the catchment area that Oxford station currently serves, Evergreen 3 will also increase the number of services and destinations accessible from Oxford station. Evergreen 3 will therefore increase the number of passenger journeys generated from Oxford station's remaining catchment area. Chiltern Railways' Statement of Case does not provide robust evidence that Oxford Station's net passenger traffic will be reduced.

For the sake of public transport it is to be hoped that Evergreen 3 will considerably increase passenger numbers through Oxford station. Both Network Rail and Chiltern have plans to increase the station's rail passenger capacity. However, Oxford rail station's bus stops have only limited capacity to add new or increased bus services to serve such an increase in rail passenger traffic.

Network Rail's plan to add an "up" bay platform beside St Thomas's car park just south of Oxford station may be deferred indefinitely under HM Government spending reductions, so capacity for onward rail connections will also be constrained.

Buses to and from Oxford station forecourt serve a range of destinations:

5	City centre, Cowley Road, Cowley, Blackbird Leys	every 5-10 mins
13	City centre, Marston, John Radcliffe Hospital	every 20 mins
14	Cherwell Drive, John Radcliffe Hospital	hourly
14A	Marston, John Radcliffe Hospital	hourly
17A	Cherwell Drive, John Radcliffe Hospital	hourly, eves only
17C	Marston, John Radcliffe Hospital	hourly, Sun only
25	Gosford, Bletchingdon, Kirtlington, Weston, Bicester	hourly
25A	Gosford, Bletchingdon, Kirtlington, Heyford, Middleton, Bicester	hourly

31	Abingdon, Marcham, Wantage	every 30 mins , evenings only
100	Seacourt P&R, Cherwell Drive, John Radcliffe Hospital	every 30 mins
105	Littlemore, Berinsfield, Dorchester, Shillingford, Wallingford	3-5 journeys
106	Littlemore, Sandford, Oxford Science Park	hourly
115	Berinsfield, Wallingford	1 journey
280	Wheatley, Thame, Haddenham, Aylesbury	every 30 mins
S3	Yarnton, Woodstock, Charlbury	hourly
S3	Yarnton, Woodstock, Enstone, Chipping Norton	hourly
X3	City centre, Abingdon	every 20-30 mins

However, between the rail station booking hall and forecourt bus stops there is a flight of numerous steps that have no roof, are exposed to all weathers and hence are at risk of ice and snow. Step-free access between the forecourt bus stops and the booking hall is by a circuitous ramp.

Other destinations are served by buses to and from Frideswide Square:

4	Rose Hill, city centre, Cumnor, Abingdon	hourly
4A	Rose Hill, city centre, Elms Rise	every 20 mins
4B	Rose Hill, city centre, Cumnor (& Abingdon eves & Sun)	hourly
4C	Rose Hill, city centre, Dean Court	hourly
11	Eynsham, Long Hanborough, Freeland, North Leigh, Witney	hourly
66	Besselsleigh, Southmoor, Faringdon, Shrivenham, Swindon	hourly
400	Seacourt P&R, city centre, Headington, Thornhill P&R	every 10-15mins
S1	Farmoor, Eynsham, Witney (& Carterton every 30 mins)	every 15 mins
U1	Harcourt Hill, city centre, Headington, Wheatley	every 15 mins in term time
X30	Cumnor, East Hanney, Grove, Wantage	hourly

Between the rail station booking hall and Frideswide Square the pedestrian route is more than 200 metres, which is a distance that the DfT's *Inclusive Mobility* guidelines identifies as a limit that deters many disabled people from travelling by public transport..

Barton, Greater Leys, Kennington, New Headington, New Hinksey, Risinghurst, and Wood Farm have no direct bus links with the rail station. Access is by changing buses in central Oxford.

3.4 Road congestion around Bicester Town station

The improvement of Bicester Town station and increase in rail services calling at the station are likely to increase the number of car journeys in and around Bicester. This may be exacerbated by the low frequency of bus services linking Bicester with some of the communities that Chiltern Railways predicts will use Bicester Town.

Bicester Town station is currently served by only about three buses *per hour*:

22	Field Farm, Langford Village, Bicester	every 30 mins
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- | | | |
|-----------|---|--------------------------|
| 94 | Ambrosden, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Oddington, Islip, Gosford, Summertown, Magdalen Street | <i>1 journey per day</i> |
| S5 | Arncott, Ambrosden, Bicester, Gosford, Summertown, Magdalen Street, Oxford Rail Station | <i>hourly</i> |

Most passengers using Bicester Town will come from within Bicester itself. There will therefore be a need to increase the frequency of bus route 22.

Chiltern Railways has supported feeder bus services to Bicester North station. However, these serve only local neighbourhoods in and around Bicester. Chiltern has repeatedly expanded Bicester North station car park and has not established feeder bus services from significant communities outside Bicester.

Bicester North station is currently served by about five buses *per hour*:

- | | | |
|-----------|--|-------------------------------|
| 16 | Aylesbury, Steeple Claydon, Launton, Bicester | <i>5or 6 journeys per day</i> |
| 18 | Buckingham, Steeple Claydon, Launton, Bicester | <i>4 journeys per day</i> |
| 23 | Banbury Road, Bure Park, Caversfield, Southwold, Bicester | <i>every 30 mins</i> |
| S5 | Launton, Bicester, Gosford, Summertown, Magdalen Street, Oxford Rail Station | <i>hourly</i> |
| X5 | Milton Keynes, Buckingham, Bicester, Oxford | <i>every 30 mins</i> |

Chiltern Railways' *Statement of Case* maps significant numbers of passengers using Bicester North from communities several miles outside Bicester including Brackley and Buckingham. The X5 coach service gives Buckingham a good-quality link with Bicester North every half-hour. However, Brackley's only bus link with Bicester is the X88, which runs only four times *per day* and is an unreliable and unattractive service provided by a contractor using an old vehicle in poor condition. Also Arriva the Shires' routes 16 and 18 link significant villages such as Steeple Claydon with Bicester North, but run only 4–6 times *per day*.

Bus links with Brackley and Steeple Claydon need improvement, but they run across county boundaries which unfortunately makes it difficult to get a County Council on either side of the boundary to give enough revenue support to deliver the necessary improvements. It would be in both the railway's interest and the public interest if Chiltern Railways were to support bus improvements for Bicester, particularly to the X88 to Brackley and Silverstone which is currently very inadequately supported by Northamptonshire County Council.

3.5 London Road level crossing

Chiltern Railways' *Statement of Case* states that it would be impractical and unduly intrusive to replace London Road level crossing on the B4100 in Bicester with a road bridge.

However, it also states that the crossing would close the road to allow trains to pass for 12 two-minute periods of each hour on weekdays. Thus the road would be closed on weekdays for 24 minutes of every hour, or 40% of the time. All buses currently serving Bicester Town station – routes 22, 94 and S5 – use the level crossing. Increased closures of the crossing would significantly increase delays to road traffic, and their two-minute duration would significantly affect journey times and timetabling of buses.

It is highly unlikely that the two-minute closures would be at evenly-spaced time intervals. The diverse requirements of different freight and passenger workings in two directions would almost certainly lead to some closures being less than three minutes apart, increasing frustration and delays to road traffic.

Frequent crossing closures and traffic queues would reduce road vehicle engine efficiency and greatly increase emissions around the crossing. Nitrous oxides (NO_x) and diesel particulates (PM₁₀) would be significant hazards, and possibly carbon monoxide (CO) and unburnt hydrocarbons as well. It seems inexplicable and unacceptable that Chiltern Railways' *Statement of Case* does not even offer a monitoring station to measure air quality at the crossing and record the frequency and extent to which public health limits may be breached.

Chiltern Railways' *Statement of Case* makes too much of the fact that London Road level crossing is a restricted site close to a Conservation Area. The Conservation Area ends at the junction of Station Approach, nearly 100 metres north of the level crossing. Buildings south of the Conservation Area, on either side of the crossing, are not of particular merit for preservation. A bridge could be built some distance south-west of the crossing, using Station Approach as the alignment of its northern approach and redeveloping part of Talisman Road trading area to accommodate its southern approach. Either the bridge could pass over the redeveloped Bicester Town station or the station could be repositioned just north or just south of the new bridge.

If a road bridge really were too intrusive physically and visually, a foot and cycle bridge would be less intrusive on both counts. A foot and cycle bridge would not directly reduce emissions from queuing traffic, although indirectly it would encourage zero-emission non-motorised alternatives. However, encouraging environmentally-sustainable transport modes and integration between sustainable modes are among Project Evergreen 3's objectives. It therefore seems inexplicable and unacceptable that Chiltern Railways does not propose such a bridge.

4.1 Public rights of way

For this section please refer to the *Stoppages & Diversions of Public Rights of Way* map accompanying this Statement of Case.

Chiltern Railways has revised its proposals to stop or divert public bridleways and footpaths that currently cross the line between Bicester and Oxford. Its original proposal included providing no replacement for any of the crossings to be closed on the two-mile stretch of line between Oddington Crossing and the M40. This would have imposed unreasonable inconvenience and loss of amenity on walkers and equestrians.

The revised proposal includes an additional new bridge for bridleway BW157/4. The bridge would be in Charlton-on-Otmoor parish at Ordnance Survey grid reference SP554171, about 400 metres south-west of Holts Farm. This would be about 1,400 metres from the proposed bridge beside the M40 and about 1,600 metres from the proposed bridge to replace Oddington Crossing.

This proposal for an additional bridge is welcome but it does not solve the problem. Footpaths FP318/2 and FP318/6 currently link Oddington and Charlton-on-Otmoor respectively with Weston-on-the-Green. Both of these footpaths are to be stopped up and there is no proposal to connect the diverted BW157/4 with either of them. The diversion of these footpaths to the new bridge next to Oddington Crossing is a reasonable 300 metres for FP318/2 but an unreasonable 1,000 metres for FP318/6.

The walk between Charlton-on-Otmoor and Weston-on-the-Green would be significantly increased: from 2½ to 3½ miles. This would unreasonably inconvenience law-abiding walkers between the

two villages. However, walkers would then be tempted to take a short-cut of about 400 metres across fields between the diverted BW157/4 and footpath FP318/9, which connects with FP318/6. If this led to significant disturbance of crops or livestock it would unreasonably inconvenience the farmer.

Further, for a distance of almost six miles between the A41 at Bicester and the B4027 at Islip there is no public road linking the villages on opposite sides of the railway. Historically this will not always have been the case. It may be a result of either the inclosures of common lands early in the 19th century, or the building of the Oxford and Bletchley Junction Railway in 1846–51, or both. This geographical gap makes the retention of non-motorised rights of way across the railway all the more important.

One solution would seem to be a new footpath westwards of north-westwards from the diverted BW157/4 in the area of OS grid reference SP552173 to a point on FP318/6 that is mutually convenient for walkers and the farmer. It seems entirely unreasonable to stop up the railway crossing for FP318/6 unless a new direct footpath between Charlton and Weston is provided.

5.1 Mitigating noise from railway traffic

Noise disturbing properties adjacent to a railway line is outside the sphere of Bus Users UK's interests. However, the author has direct experience of a railway noise mitigation scheme implemented when traffic increased on the West London Railway in the 1990's.

The opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1994 led to the electrification of the West London Line (WLL) between Clapham Junction and Willesden Junction, a substantial increase in rail freight throughout the WLL, and Eurostar empty coaching stock workings using the WLL between Latchmere Road Junction and Mitre Bridge Junction. This greatly increased train noise that disturbed properties adjacent to the line and the number of times *per day* that properties were disturbed.

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea successfully negotiated for Railtrack to fund a noise mitigation scheme. A study identified precisely which rooms of which properties were most significantly affected and what form of enhanced glazing would best dampen the noise. In most cases this was double glazing, but in a few cases glazing with extremely thick glass was used instead.

Because the glazing would dampen noise only when the windows were closed, wall-mounted passive ventilators were included so that householders would be able to keep windows closed on more occasions. However, being passive the ventilators were not very effective in circulating air. Fan-assisted ventilators would have been an alternative. However, some householders would not have been able to sleep with the noise from such fans.

6.1 Sources

Chiltern Railways, *Statement of Case*, August 2010

Department for Transport, *Inclusive Mobility*, accessed 21st January 2010: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/peti/inclusivemobility>

Network Rail, *Great Western RUS Draft for Consultation*, RUS132/September 2009

Bus Users UK Oxford Group response

CHILTERN RAILWAYS EVERGREEN 3 T.W.A. ORDER APPLICATION

BUS LINKS WITH RAIL PASSENGER CATCHMENT AREAS



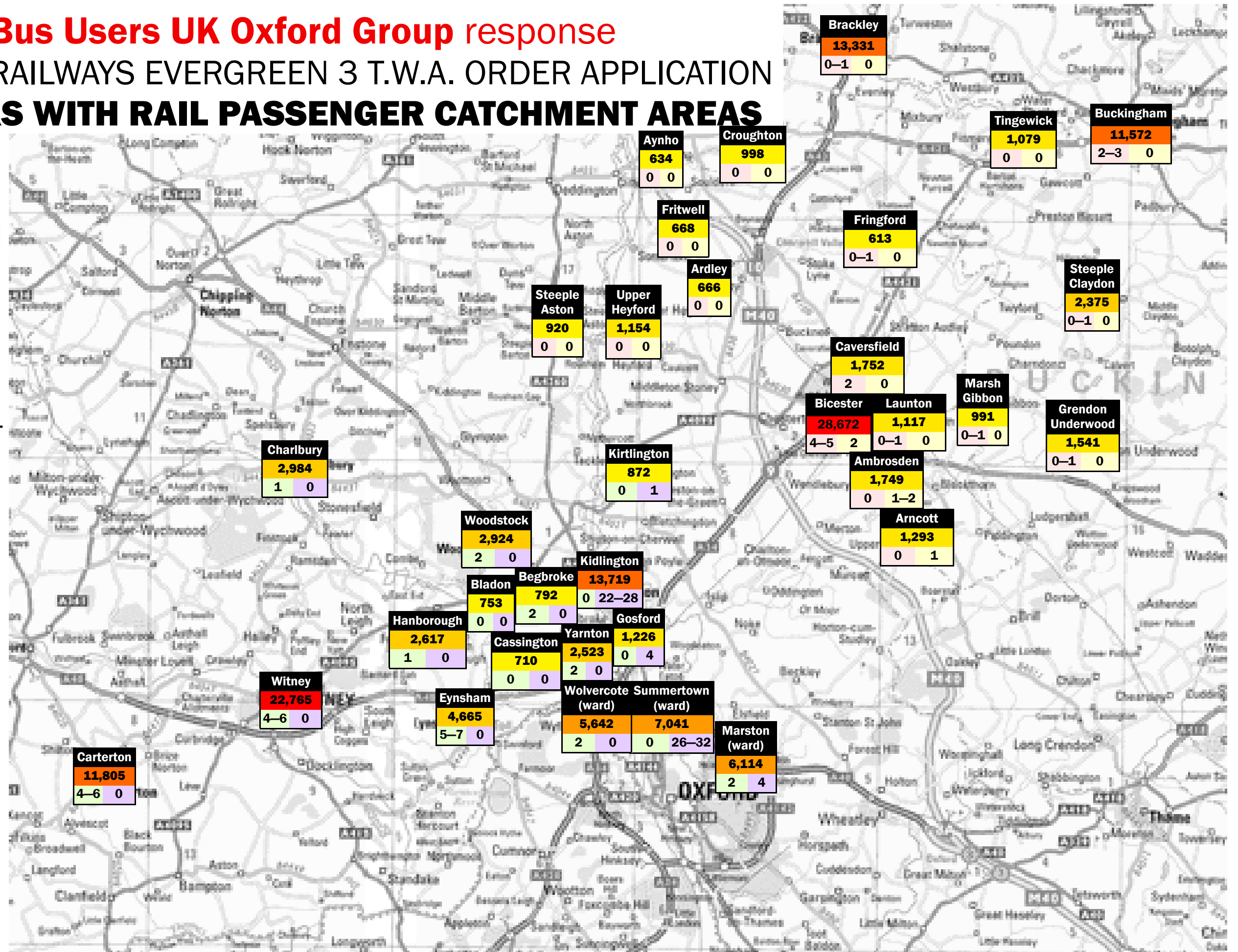
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BUSES PER HOUR TO RAIL STATIONS (Mon-Sat)

- Bicester North**
- Bicester Town**
- Oxford**
- Water Eaton Parkway**

CIVIL PARISH (or ward) 2001 POPULATIONS

- 20,001 – 50,000**
- 10,001 – 20,000**
- 5,001 – 10,000**
- 2,001 – 5,000**
- 1,001 – 2,000**
- 501 – 1,000**



Bus Users UK Oxford Group response

CHILTERN RAILWAYS EVERGREEN 3 T.W.A. ORDER APPLICATION STOPPAGES & DIVERSIONS OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY



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