

# Audley End and Great Chesterford Railway Stations

## North Area Panel item 7

**Committee:** North Area Panel

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**Title:** Audley End and Great Chesterford  
Railway Stations

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**Agenda Item**

**7**

Item for  
information

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### Summary

This report provides Members with details of a survey undertaken by Mouchel Parkman Consultants on behalf of Essex County Council in relation to the conditions of and access to Great Chesterford and Audley End Railway Stations.

### Recommendations

That Members note the report for information and that Officers provide Members with updates as and when progress occurs.

### Background Papers

Summary document – Mouchel Parkman Study

Survey undertaken by LA21 in conjunction with the Council in February 2003

### Impact

Communication/Consultation	<b>Rail users</b>
Community Safety	<b>Community Safety implications are implicit within the main body of the report</b>
Equalities	<b>Not applicable</b>
Finance	<b>Not applicable to UDC</b>
Human Rights	<b>Not applicable</b>
Legal implications	<b>Should developments go ahead to Swan Meadow car park, a new off street parking order would have to be drawn-up</b>
Ward-specific impacts	<b>Saffron Walden and the Chesterfords</b>
Workforce/Workplace	<b>Not applicable</b>

### Situation

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1. This report is about the railway stations at Audley End and Great Chesterford near Saffron Walden in Uttlesford, Essex. The report looks at the current layout and operation of the two stations and makes recommendations for improvements. Mouchel Parkman were commissioned by Essex County Council to prepare the report.
2. The report highlights the problems with public transport, cycling and walking between Audley End station and Saffron Walden town centre. Particular mention is made of the proposed cycle route and the park and rail bus service between the town and the station and options to enhance the existing bus service. At Great Chesterford station the report includes the provision of a new car park.
3. The improvements recommended at each station include three new designs for the station layout at Audley End and one for Great Chesterford.

4. Audley End is the gateway station to Saffron Walden and serves the major commuter routes into London and Cambridge. The recommendations have been tailored with this in mind and the need to improve station access, encourage sustainable modes of transport, and improve the environment and ambience of the travelling public.



5. Great Chesterford is a local village station with the potential to attract greater passenger numbers by the provision of a new car park. This could ease the pressure on parking at Audley End.



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#### PROBLEMS AT AUDLEY END

6. Each method of travel to and from the station has its own particular problems both on the journey and at the station. Some problems are common to more than one mode of transport.

Buses have to perform a three point turn which is dangerous for pedestrians and other vehicles in the vicinity and also delays the service.

There is no official bus stop for setting down and picking up passengers which causes considerable confusion for travellers.

There is no travel information for passengers.

There is no shelter or seating for passengers waiting for buses and taxis

There is no provision for disabled passengers to access the buses

There is no segregation of buses from other traffic negotiating the station forecourt

The speed hump is unpleasant for drivers and passengers and could be dangerous to those not familiar with its presence. There is inadequate warning, signing and illumination of the speed hump.

Other station users also experience problems to some degree, particularly cyclists and pedestrians

At peak times the taxi rank is over subscribed. The station forecourt is congested at peak times. The cycle racks are fragmented around the station and in various states of repair and condition. The cycle racks are exposed to the weather except those in the old passenger shelter. The old passenger shelter is used as an unofficial toilet which discourages cycle storage.

Cycle storage on the northbound platform is inaccessible. Provision for motorcycles is cramped with no provision for securing machines which are exposed to the weather. The motor cycle parking area is bounded on one side by the edge of the



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old platform with a dangerous drop.

There is no separate route for pedestrians to reach the station. There is no dropped kerb at end of existing footway to the station. There is no provision for disabled passengers to access northbound platform. The station signs do not indicate that this is the station serving Saffron Walden. The toilets are not open 24 hours because of risk of vandalism. The Help Point is inconspicuous and the waiting room was closed due to vandalism.

There is a lack of litter bins and complaints of litter around station. The unofficial access to Bearwalden Business Park needs to be made formal and the pedestrian access through Wendens Garage is overgrown.

The car park tends to be oversubscribed at times making it difficult for users to find spaces and encourage on street parking and unofficial commuter parking in nearby businesses. The car parking layout has not been amended to take account of new waiting room. Some car parking spaces are too small to use resulting in a loss of capacity. The size of many parking spaces has been reduced by encroaching vegetation. The car parking charges are too high

7. Further problems are experienced on journeys to and from the station particularly by bus and cycle. Some buses out dated discouraging use by commuters. Small buses are sometimes used at peak times resulting in passengers having to stand. Buses do not run in the evenings and on Sundays. Some buses failing to display proper destinations and service numbers.
8. There is inadequate provision for passengers at the main bus stops throughout the town in terms of shelter, seating and information. Station services do not serve outlying residential areas of the town and the Town centre service is complex and does not always connect with station services. Surrounding villages poorly served by bus services. There is no purpose built cycle route between the town and the station and Cyclists have to share the route with other traffic. The route is hilly, twisting, exposed and unlit. There are no facilities for cyclists to cycle to town centre, store cycles securely and use buses to the station.
9. There is no footway for pedestrians along sections of the route between the town and the station and some of the existing footway is in poor condition. There is inadequate signing from the town to the station and there are no dropped kerbs or tactile paving for pedestrians at the junction of Station Road, Royston Road and the station access road. The station access road is in poor condition

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AUDLEY END**

10. Mouchell Packman came up with a series of recommendations for ECC; the recommendations are divided into three groups, Short Term, Medium Term, and Long Term. The recommendations are set out in Appendix 1.

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#### THE PARK AND RIDE SCHEME

- 11 This is a proposal to provide commuter car parking in Saffron Walden town centre and a bus service to take commuters to the station. The Swan Meadow car park, a few minutes walk from the town centre, has been identified as a suitable park and rail site because it has about 50% spare capacity. The new service could also pick up passengers at other important stops along the way such as the High Street, Council Offices and the High School subject to spare capacity and would supplement the existing services.
12. The majority of cars park at the end of the car park nearest the town centre leaving the other end of the car park virtually empty. This would make it easier to create a separate parking area for the park and rail if required. There is also an existing coach stop, parking and turning facilities which could be adopted by the park and rail.
- 13 There are indications that the Audley End station is at capacity and there may be a suppressed demand. Commuters could be using their cars for longer journeys because the station car park is full.



- 14 The park and ride would provide extra parking capacity without the need to extend the station car park. Nearly half the commuters using the station originate from the town. It has been calculated that if the bus ran every 10 minutes throughout the peak periods it could potentially carry up to 20 passengers per trip.
- 15 The service is envisaged to operate during peak periods to begin with but this could be extended throughout the day subject to demand. A survey was undertaken in February 2003 which suggests that there is a demand for a Park and Ride service to be introduced. The results of the survey are set out in Appendix 2.
- 16 Minimal civil works would be required to adopt Swan Meadow for the park and ride. Provision of passenger waiting and seating areas with lighting and weather protection would be required along with real time information signs to indicate bus departures. Static signs to indicate operating times and charges would also be needed. Cycle parking and storage should be considered for cyclists who wished to use the park and rail service. The park and ride could

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be introduced on an experimental basis initially with a suitable charging structure to attract customers.

### Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
<b>That ECC will not have the finance available to instigate the recommendations made by the Consultants</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>The Council will need to ensure that it is kept abreast of any developments with regular consultation and updated reports being provided to Members and the local community</b>
<b>That ECC will fail to consult with the Council in an appropriate manner and “pick and choose” to implement certain recommendations</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>As above</b>

### Appendix 1

#### **Short Term**

*1. To take steps to set up the Saffron Walden Gateway Station partnership, secure funding for and appoint a Project Officer to seek funding and prepare a programme and action plan of works.*

*2. Add the railways station symbol together with the word “Station” and the distance to all the appropriate directional signs around the town centre and towards Audley End. The signs including tourist signing from the station towards the town should also be reviewed and upgraded where necessary.*

*3. Negotiate an official pedestrian access to the Bearwalden Business Park*

*4. Make the Help Point more conspicuous*

*5. Remove vegetation from the pedestrian access by Wendens Garage through to the station forecourt and maintain*

*6. Increase the provision of litter bins*

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- 7. Change platform signs from “Audley End” to “Audley End for Saffron Walden”*
- 8. As an experiment with the existing toilets being kept open, provide Mosquito Ultrasonic Teenage Youth Deterrent*
- 9. Reorganise the station forecourt and surrounding car park to provide the following major improvements: -*
  - Provide a proper designated bus stop marked out in a white with the words ‘BUS STOP’*
  - Provide 3m minimum paved area with kerbed surround for waiting bus passengers with raised footway for low floor buses.*
  - Provide overhead canopies with weather protection, lighting and vandal proof seats for the bus stop and taxi rank.*
  - Provide illuminated bus stop sign with service numbers*
  - Provide a circulatory system so that buses do not have to reverse when negotiating the station forecourt*
  - Bring all cycle parking together at one location adjacent to the station building and the southbound platform with new secure Sheffield Stands or an agreed alternative and overhead weather protection.*
  - Establish a secure parking area for motorcycles with locking posts and overhead weather protection adjacent to the station building and the southbound platform*
  - Provide a segregated pedestrian route from the station access road to the station building and southbound platform.*
  - Widen footway and provide tactile paving and dropped kerb where existing footway alongside the station access road terminates alongside speed hump*
  - Seek architectural advice on surface finishes for paved pedestrian areas, signing, bollards, seating, lighting and overhead canopies*
  - Remove speed hump and repair street lamp alongside*
  - Rearrange car parking bays alongside the southbound platform waiting room and in the lower level car park due east from the station to increase car park capacity.*
  - Maintain and enlarge the taxi rank to six spaces*
  - Maintain the two disabled parking bays*

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- *Maintain and in some options increase the short term waiting bays*
  - *Maintain and in some options increase the premium permit holder parking bays*
10. *Provide Real Time Passenger Information Displays for bus passengers.*
  11. *Provide static bus timetables, bus operator information and town map.*
  12. *Investigate feasibility of combined car park and rail tickets with reductions for car sharing.*
  13. *Renew white and yellow lines on station access road and repair pot holes.*
  14. *Erect signs to advertise spare capacity at Newport Station car park.*
  15. *Spray car park surface with bitumen and remark parking bays where width is less than 2.2m.*
  16. *Cut back overhanging vegetation and clear ground level vegetation to restore parking bays to full size.*
  17. *Remove and, or cut back trees whose sap damages vehicle paintwork*
  18. *Remove cycle rack on northbound platform until formal access for cyclists is negotiated through Bearwalden Business Park*
  19. *Provide prominent sign indicating location of cycle parking and motor cycle parking*
  20. *Provide robust secure lockers for cyclists and motorcyclists at the back of the southbound platform under cover.*
  21. *As an interim measure provide a safety barrier along the edge of the platform bordering the motorcycle parking area*
  22. *Consult the various disabled groups on the demand for disabled parking spaces*

#### **Medium Term**

23. *That a Demand Responsive Transport network is introduced to Saffron Walden, Audley End and the surrounding villages.*
24. *Provide free pocket size timetables at Audley End Station showing all bus and rail services that operate from that station (if not already available)*
25. *Install a Free Standing Automatic Toilet in the style of the toilet at Swan Meadow car park*
26. *One Railway to work towards the Secure Stations Scheme Accreditation*
27. *One Railway to work towards the Secure Parking Scheme Status. The improvements proposed at Audley End should be vetted by the Police*
27. *Option to widen segregated footway to provide shared pedestrian, cycle r route across station forecourt with loss of some parking spaces*



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28. *Review station, car park, and access road street lighting and upgrade if required*
29. *Investigate possibility of passengers and staff being able to see buses arriving from inside the station building by altering ticket office layout and windows if necessary. Provide a Passenger Information Display for buses inside the ticket office.*
30. *Provide intelligent bus destination panels on buses to show service number, destination, and "Rail Link".*
31. *Operators should be encouraged to use modern vehicles and larger vehicles at peak times.*
32. *Public Transport Options between Saffron Walden and Audley End*
  - *That a car sharing scheme should be promoted.*
  - *That a cycle park and ride scheme should be introduced*
  - *That Option B from the Wendens Road Cycle Feasibility Report is adopted along with the restoration of the existing footways at each end and a new footway in between together with new street lighting and appropriate tree and hedge planting.*
  - *Consider introducing a Raillink service using buses to replicate an extension of the railway network into Saffron Walden town centre.*
  - *Consider simplifying the 34 town service to make it consistent throughout the day.*
  - *Consider extending the following bus services to Audley End Station: - 18, 313, and Village Link.*
  - *Consider preparing a Rural Transport Plan for Saffron Walden and the surrounding villages.*
  - *Consider introducing an additional town centre bus service which includes Audley End station*
  - *Extend bus services to run late at night and on Sundays*
  - *At major bus stops in Saffron Walden High Street, the Council Offices, and County High School provide bus stop signs and road markings, service numbers and timetables, real time Passenger Information Displays, bus shelters and seating.*
  - *Review the style and format of the timetables.*

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- *Make the County Council web site for travellers easier to find from the home page and more user friendly on the lines of the Intalink model.*

### **Long Term**

33. *To introduce the PLUSBUS through ticketing availability from Saffron Walden to all rail destinations from Audley End.*
34. *Provide dropped kerbs and tactile paving for pedestrians at the junction of B1039, Station Road, Royston Road, and the station access road, Robinson Lane.*
35. *Repair and resurface the access road, Robinson Lane*
36. *Negotiate and provide disabled access to the northbound platform through Bearwalden Business Park*
37. *Demolish redundant branch line waiting room and if necessary reconstruct in a new location possibly on Great Chesterford northbound platform*
38. *Provide covered walkway from bus stop and taxi rank to station building and southbound platform.*
39. *Major scheme to increase car parking capacity -*
  - *Highest priority - to develop land for car parking or industrial, business development between the station and Bearwalden Business Park*
  - *Lower priority - to use grazing land east of the station to expand the car park subject to planning and environmental constraints.*
  - *Lowest priority - construct an upper deck over the existing low level car park to the east of the station.*
40. *Promote the introduction of a taxi car link scheme similar to the one operated by Virgin Trains.*
41. *Look to developers for future contributions towards improvements to Audley End Station*
42. *Investigate possibility of creating a public right of way from Rookery Lane to the northbound station platform and upgrading the path to provide a reasonable all weather route to the station.*
43. *Major scheme to provide passenger lifts on both platforms linked to the existing footbridge or connected by a new bridge.*
44. *Set up an experimental park and rail scheme and if successful make the scheme permanent by carrying out the works detailed in the full report*
45. *Take steps to set up a Community Rail Partnership and a Quality Bus Partnership.*

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46. *Research and submit funding applications. It may be helpful to employ consultants to carry out this task.*

### **Appendix 2**

#### **Saffron Walden to Audley End Bus Survey – Analysis of Results**

*500 Surveys issued, 240 surveys returned which indicates a 40% response. The national average for a response to a postal survey is 10%.*

#### **Q1. How frequently do you use the train?**

<i>Daily</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Annually</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>7%</i>	<i>22%</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>1.0%</i>	<i>20%</i>

#### **Q2 How do you usually get to the railway station?**

<i>Bus</i>	<i>Walk</i>	<i>Taxi</i>	<i>Cycle</i>	<i>Car</i>
<i>7%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>80%</i>

#### **Q3. If you normally use a car:**

*Is it parked at the station or are you usually dropped off/picked up?*

*52% park at the station, 48% are picked up or dropped off*

#### **Q4. Do you consider the current bus service are sufficient?**

*95% considered the current bus service to be insufficient.*

#### **Q5. Would you use the bus services if they were to coincide with train arrivals and departures?**

*100% indicated that they would use a bus if they were provided at appropriate times.*

#### **Q6. How early do you need a bus service to be provided?**

*5.00am was considered to be the earliest that a bus should be provided. General comments suggest that more buses were required during the day as the car park is invariably full by 9.30am.*

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**Q7.     *How late would you need a bus service to be provided?***

*Akin to Q6, respondents indicated that they wish to see the last bus coincide with the arrival of the last train.*

**Q8.     *Where do you consider to be the most appropriate pick-up/drop off points?***

*The High Street and the Common were regarded as the most appropriate pick-up/drop off points with associated stops en route. However, there were some requests for the services to continue into the outlying villages also, e.g., Swards End, Wimbish etc.*