



Great Western Railway

Annual Stakeholder Report 2017-18



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FIVE GO ON A GREAT WESTERN ADVENTURE





1.0 Managing Director Foreword

Welcome to this, our fourth annual report to stakeholders. This has been another year of progress in the regeneration of the Great Western railway.

I am pleased that we now have Intercity Express Trains in passenger service offering more seats and a better onboard environment. We also have our Electrostar suburban electric trains operating from Didcot through to Paddington, providing extra seats from busy stations such as Twyford, Maidenhead and Slough. The launch of TfL rail services from Heathrow Airport and Hayes and Harlington to Paddington has released more of our trains adding further seats in the London and Thames Valley from May 2018.

We have the first of our modified four carriage High Speed Trains, our Castle Class trains, in operation in the West, and more turbo services operating on our Wales and Central services. We have signed a deal to bring an additional fleet of tri-mode trains into service. This is something to look forward to in 2019 bringing further benefits to the Thames Valley, North Downs and West services. We have seen Kemble and Gloucester car parks open, and started work at Cheltenham and Didcot. We have rebuilt our train care depot at Penzance and started work on a new depot at Exeter.

We are delivering on our promise to provide more trains, more seats and faster journeys.

However, I understand very clearly that this has also been a very difficult year for customers, some of our routes have seen far too many delays and cancellations.

In the report we go into some detail as to why, but I wanted to take the opportunity to assure you that we understand the

impact of poor performance and we agree it has not been good enough. We are sorry we did not always meet the high standards you and we expect and we will do better.

It is getting better on some routes already, and I am determined that the remaining fleet and infrastructure transition will be done with the minimum of disruption to customers.

Over the next year we will complete the transformation of our fleet. All our long-distance services will be operated by Intercity Express Trains, we will bring more trains to the Central, Wales and West regions, we will work with Transport for London to maximise the benefits to our customers of the opening of the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) and we will renew our commitment to work with you, our stakeholders and our partners, to deliver a service that we can all be proud to call "our railway"

We will continue to work hard to improve performance and reliability. I also recognise that there are aspirations for further service enhancements, and we will take the opportunity of the completed upgrade to bring more improvements to the Great Western network over the next 12 months.

Mark Hopwood
Managing Director



2.0 Mark Langman, Network Rail, Route Managing Director, Western

This is an historic time for the Western route and our Alliance with Great Western Railway. Many years of work and huge investment are bringing about a transformation that is beginning to be felt across every part of the network.

There is more to do but the achievements are huge. Overhead electrification means that Class 387 Electrostars are now running the 53 miles between Didcot and Paddington. The new GWR Class 800 Intercity Express Trains, which began running in October, are now a common sight between London, Bristol and South Wales and have travelled over one million miles in service. Working together, our two organisations have introduced 10% more seats into and out of London Paddington for peak hours, and 20% more seats through Bristol Temple Meads. The average age of rolling stock has been slashed in half and the cascade of newer trains released to the wider network by electrification means that benefits are being felt right across the route.

New trains are only half of the story. During the past year Network Rail has continued to renew and enhance the railway infrastructure to improve reliability, resilience and capacity across the route. Huge progress has been made on Great Western Electrification and this continues

week on week. We have been transforming our signalling with significant upgrades in Paddington, Cornwall and Bristol where we successfully completed the single largest resignalling ever undertaken by Network Rail. We have also completed a new platform at Bristol Parkway and completed major drainage works at Hinksey and Chipping Sodbury, solving a problem that has previously caused train delays. Meanwhile we are testing Digital Railway innovations which hold the potential to unlock even greater capacity and resilience on our network.

Proving that safety and efficiency go hand in hand, our safety performance is improving across the board. I know that everyone at GWR as well as Network Rail will continue to work day and night to keep our railway the safest in Europe and drive our safety standards ever higher.

Underlying all of this success has been our Alliance with Great Western Railway. This partnership, supported by an



independently-chaired Route Supervisory Board, has given us a sharper focus on customer service and enabled us to deliver benefits while minimising disruption and cost. The effectiveness of this joint working was recognised last year by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), who recently gave us their 'Outstanding Achievement in Passenger Transport' award.

Despite enormous efforts on all sides, performance is not where we want it to be with our overall PPM below the target we have set. This is frustrating but we understand the causes and have aggressive short and long-term plans to make improvements as we go through the transition phase of introducing new rolling stock fleets and new infrastructure across the route.

GWR and Network Rail have lived the promise we made when we signed the Alliance agreement in 2016 – to put the customer at the heart of everything we do and work to raise

standards ever higher. That work, and the transformation it is bringing about, will bring rail users more of the things that they value: more seats, greater capacity and faster and more reliable services for everyone. The work we are doing now will be felt for many years.

I am confident that our Alliance will reach new heights in the years to come as we continue to deliver the biggest transformation of the Western route since Brunel, with investment in infrastructure and the largest fleet upgrade in a generation.

Best wishes

Mark Langman

Route Managing Director, Western



3.0 Our Strategic Priorities



Delighting our customers

Bringing improvements to our business for the long term benefit of our customers and managing the factors that impact customer satisfaction and analysing customer research.



Disciplined operations

Finding ways to improve our service delivery and manage the factors that impact customer satisfaction, while maintaining and developing our commitment to safety.



Great people

Recognising that our goals will only be delivered with our colleagues' commitment and seeking out new ways to deliver the best customer experience possible.



Keeping our communities prospering

Working to engage with the wider communities we serve to deliver a sustainable future in a socially responsible way, so we become integral to their infrastructure and a preferred partner with solutions for their local needs.



Driving business growth

Driving the revenue and profitability of our business, meeting our franchise obligations and securing more third party investment for the benefit of our customers.



4. Delighting Our Customers



4.1 HM The Queen names new Intercity Express Train “Queen Elizabeth II”

Her Majesty The Queen marked the 175th anniversary of the first rail journey made by a monarch, recreating the original journey made by Queen Victoria, before naming a new Intercity Express Train “Queen Elizabeth II” at Paddington Station in June.

On 13 June 1842, Queen Victoria made the journey from Slough to Paddington and became the first British monarch to travel by train. The train that day was driven by Daniel Gooch and assisted by Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

To mark this unique occasion we recreated the journey between the two stations using its new Hitachi-built Intercity Express Train (IET), in the presence of HM The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. The Royal party were joined on the train by Isambard Thomas and Gillian White, the direct descendants of Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Sir Daniel Gooch.

Following the naming ceremony, Tim O’Toole, Chief Executive of GWR’s owner’s FirstGroup presented The Queen with a pair of specially designed coins which will become a feature of our new Intercity Express trains.

Her Majesty was greeted at Slough Station by school children from four local schools who had produced their own drawings to mark the occasion. There were more than 100

children, aged between five and 11, from Slough’s St Mary’s Primary, IROA Slough Islamic School, James Elliman Academy, and Marish Primary School.

Mark Hopwood said: “We are delighted that The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were able to join us to mark this historic anniversary. We at GWR are extremely proud of our heritage and this occasion marked a very special moment in the history of the Great Western Railway.”

Secretary of State for Transport Chris Grayling said: “This is a truly inspirational event and a fitting tribute to the proud heritage of Brunel’s railway. This route remains one of the foundations of our rail network and as a nation we should be proud of our railways, which continue to be the bedrock of our public transport system.”

Mark Langman, Managing Director of Network Rail, Western Route said:

“Today marked the culmination of years of hard work by Network Rail teams and our colleagues at GWR. It demonstrates the closer working between the rail industry partners to deliver a better railway for passengers - continuing the proud story and tradition of the Great Western Railway.”



Image shows Left to Right: Isambard Thomas Great, Great, Great, Grandson of Isambard Kingdom Brunel; Gillian White Great Great Grand Daughter of Sir Daniel Gooch; Tim O’Toole, First Group CEO; HM the Queen; Mark Hopwood GWR Managing Director and Mark Langman Network Rail Route Managing Director .

4.2 What our customers said

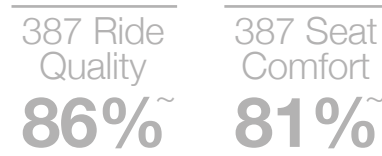
Through the year we experienced performance challenges that directly impacted our customers' experience.

This saw satisfaction dip from a high point of 84%. The introduction of the new fleet, and the cascade of existing fleet to new regions within the GWR area, improved satisfaction, and we ended the year with customer satisfaction at 82%.

This demonstrated in very clear terms how important reliability is to our customers and we are right to give this our utmost attention. Not only is it our fundamental promise it is also the foundation to deliver the best customer experience we can at every touchpoint on a customer's journey.



Looking forward to 2018/19 with a more stable performance position, satisfaction is expected to rise to new levels, reflecting the investment being made right across the customer experience.



* Source GWR Customer Satisfaction Monitor 2017/18 n=151
~ Source GWR Customer Satisfaction Monitor 2017/18 n=1 036

The alliance we have forged with Network Rail is fundamental to helping deliver this for our business; a relationship that we continue to actively build to ensure our current and future customers benefit from the service enhancements of infrastructure modernisation and new train fleets in the coming years.



IET Overall Train Satisfaction
89%*

387 Overall Train Satisfaction
84%~

4.3 Use your phone as a rail ticket

In April 2018, we launched mobile ticketing across our network, enabling customers to go from booking to boarding in just a matter of minutes and without the need for a paper ticket.

The expansion of mobile tickets across our network will enable our customers to travel with their ticket on their smartphone or tablet. If all users of the app were to buy paper-free tickets it would save a 10-metre high stack of orange rail tickets every week, or over half a kilometre every year.

Passengers can now use their smart phone or tablet as a pocket ticket machine to purchase and to travel following the installation of barcode readers at station ticket gates across the GWR network.

The scheme covers all singles and return tickets; standard and first class, adult and child. Season tickets; Group Save and Rangers and Rovers are not currently available. By downloading the GWR app customers can instantly purchase a wide range of ticket types, including on the day 'walk-up' fares, from the GWR app for the majority of journeys across the GWR network.

Tickets are displayed on the phone screen as an encrypted barcode to be scanned by new readers at ticket gates, and can also be checked on board by train managers with mobile barcode reading devices.

GWR's Head of Retail Lee Edworthy explains:
"Technology has fundamentally changed the way that we travel. The expansion of mobile ticketing will make buying a ticket and travelling with us much easier and more convenient, saving valuable time for customers.

"As one of the UK's leading transport providers, GWR is committed to making travelling by train even easier, and that is why we continue to develop our online and mobile ticketing service, ensuring we put our customers first and help communities to prosper."

Previously only a limited number of tickets for selected journeys could be displayed on a mobile device and all other ticket types purchased had to be collected from a ticket machine using the unique reference number sent to the customers' device via e-mail.

Those customers buying tickets for use on other journeys right across Britain can still use the GWR mobile app and then simply collect their tickets from a Ticket Vending machine or sales office at the station.



4.4 The biggest fleet upgrade in a generation

The biggest fleet upgrade on the Great Western Railway in a generation is well underway. In the past 12 months, the next generation Intercity Express Train (IET) has been introduced into passenger service serving London, Bristol, North Cotswolds and South Wales; and all the Class 387 Electrostars are now in service running between Didcot Parkway and London Paddington.

GWR is fulfilling its commitment to provide new or refreshed stock to every route on its network. It understands that the better the service on offer, the greater the benefits to the communities it serves. This helps local businesses go from strength to strength in continuing to make the west even greater. Already one of Britain's largest, our network carries around 1.5 million passengers every week on some 9,000 services calling at 276 stations.

IETs boast a greater seating capacity to their predecessor - a nine-car has 576 seats, 115 more than the HST. Every seat has its own power socket; there is improved WiFi on-board and an at-seat food service is available. From early 2019, the introduction of the IET timetable will allow for quicker journeys: up to 17 minutes between Bristol Temple Meads and London Paddington; and up to 14 minutes between Swansea and London Paddington.

With the IETs, GWR is paying tribute to inspirational people from the regions that it serves by naming the trains after the 'great westerners'. So far, Paddington author Michael Bond has been celebrated; Wales sporting greats Sir Gareth Edwards and John Charles honoured; and Bristol heroes Bob Woodward and Elizabeth Ralph marked – with more to come throughout the franchise.

The Turbo trains continue to be cascaded serving new destinations like Cardiff, Gloucester, Taunton and from summer 2018, Portsmouth Harbour. GWR is committed to innovation to deliver franchise promises, including the introduction of the Class 43 Castle. A short-form, four carriages long, version of the existing long-distance High Speed Trains, to add capacity to the route between Penzance and Exeter, and from next year Cardiff and Taunton as well.

Elsewhere, GWR remains dedicated to making improvements. Stations are being fitted with sleeper lounges, that when coupled with the refurbished sleeper service, will provide a quality product for passengers.

<p>Top Line Speed</p> <hr/> <p>ELECTRIC</p> <p>125 <small>mph</small></p>	<p>Top Line Speed</p> <hr/> <p>DIESEL</p> <p>125 <small>mph</small></p>
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Bi Mode

All 93 trains are capable of running on diesel and electric power.



This is one of the country's most complex and important rail networks, with the current improvements being the most significant since Brunel's original bold vision for the Great Western Railway.

As the three year anniversary of our rebrand nears, much change has been delivered across the network on what has been an exciting time. It has been a complete shift in ethos from train operator to custodian responsible for returning the railway to its former glory. There is still a lot to be delivered as GWR works tirelessly to make sure the west runs faster, smoother and more efficiently for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

ROUTE
LONDON PADDINGTON
TO PENZANCE
JOURNEY TIME SAVINGS
UP TO **16** MINUTES

ROUTE
LONDON PADDINGTON
TO PLYMOUTH
JOURNEY TIME SAVINGS
UP TO **6** MINUTES

	29 x 5 Carriage Trains		35 x 9 Carriage Trains
	When running in 5 car formation	When running in 10 car formation	
Number of Seats	326 (36 First and 290 Standard). 28 standard tables	652 (72 First Class and 580 Standard) 56 standard table	647 (71 First Class and 576 Standard). 52 standard tables
Number of toilets	5	10	10
Number of luggage Racks	8	16	16
Number of luggage holds	Flexible according to demand	Flexible according to demand	Flexible according to demand
Number of cycle spaces	Flexible according to demand	Flexible according to demand	Flexible according to demand
Number of wheelchair spaces	2	4	4
Number of kitchens	1	2	1

Food and drink

Standard and First Class at seat service available offering food and drink. Pullman Dining will remain on existing timetabled Pullman services.



4.5 Assisted Travel

Great Western Railway has, by a big margin, the largest number of assisted travel bookings, around 165,000, of any train operator. In addition, we assist a significant number of people again with unbooked requests.

Our most recent quarterly survey with users of our booked assisted travel service revealed high satisfaction levels. 90% of those surveyed were overall satisfied, with 74% of those being very satisfied. Customers praised the smooth running of the service and said that staff were both friendly and helpful, and met passengers' needs. The assisted travel service provides a vital lifeline to many customers, who would not be able to travel without it, 92% agreed that the service enabled them to be independent. We are incredibly proud of this service and the positive feedback from customers.

GWR supported members of Cardiff People First, to travel to Weston Super Mare for the day to give people confidence in using the railway and open up opportunities for them to use public transport independently.

Cardiff People First is a self-advocacy organisation run by and for people with a learning disability in Cardiff.



4.6 Prime Minister opens railway sidings for new electric services

Prime Minister, Theresa May, officially opened a new £4.5million railway siding in her constituency of Maidenhead this morning, which will see Great Western Railway increase the number of electric, peak time trains.

The sidings have been installed as part of Network Rail's Railway Upgrade Plan and will ease congestion on the railway, allowing GWR to introduce a further three new eight carriage Electrostar trains, increasing capacity and improving passenger's experience.

Theresa May, Prime Minister and MP for Maidenhead, unveiled a plaque to mark the opening of the sidings and said: "It is great to see that this vital work, which will increase capacity and improve services for passengers, has been completed ahead of schedule.

"Improving peak-time services between Maidenhead and London is one of my priorities as an MP, and it is good news for the town that we are making such progress."

The new Electrostar services were extended from Hayes & Harlington to operate between Maidenhead and London Paddington in May this year at peak times.

The newly-opened sidings have been delivered 18 months early, and electrification between Maidenhead and London Paddington was also completed ahead of time after being funded and delivered by the Crossrail project. The new sidings will be used by Elizabeth line trains from 2019.

Mark Langman, route managing director for Network Rail, said: "It was a real honour to have the Prime Minister with us to officially open the sidings which will allow more of the fantastic new GWR electric trains to run between Maidenhead and London Paddington.

"By delivering the sidings 18 months early it allows passengers to enjoy the benefits of electrification and our Railway Upgrade Plan sooner than expected."

Mark Hopwood said: "The Thames Valley is one of the most popular rail corridors in the UK. We have promised the current fleet would be upgraded to provide much needed additional capacity and more comfortable, quieter journeys.

"We started to run our first new electric trains between Paddington and Maidenhead in May 2017 and we now operate eight and twelve car services from London to Didcot offering customers great journey impact."



FIVE ON AN OXFORD OUTING



4.7 Launch of The Famous Five Campaign

As part of our vision to re-value rail in the hearts and minds of the travelling public, in September we launched our new advertising campaign, featuring The Famous Five, to coincide with the launch of our new Intercity Express Train fleet.

The campaign was created to remind travellers that there is a wonderful world of adventures on their doorstep and an incredible way to discover them. We wanted to inspire people to get on a GWR train – and more often! Few characters capture the spirit of adventure more than The Famous Five and we wanted to reignite people's passion for rail travel by reminding them that GWR is the gateway to all sorts of adventures in the South-West, London, South Wales and beyond.

It has appeared on TV, Video on Demand, Cinema, Outdoor, Print, Digital, Social Media, Radio. Across the first campaign period, it was seen an average of eleven times by 12.1 million ABC1 adults across the South-West, London and South Wales.

The campaign has been our most successful advertising campaign to-date. As well as exceeding our commercial targets, including ROI and revenue uplift, the campaign tracking revealed that we have achieved 72% spontaneous and 94% prompted brand awareness (GWR's Wave 20 campaign tracking), with impact, appeal and persuasiveness at their highest-ever level, and positive engagement with the Spring campaign at 80%, higher than any previous campaign.

We have also started to receive much industry recognition and peer awards, including the Aerial Awards for our radio script in January and winning the Graphite Pencil in D&AD's Animation & Illustration award in April. We have also submitted entries at Cannes for 'Animation for Craft Film', 'Craft Outdoor' and 'Craft Radio', the Effies and perhaps the most prestigious of all advertising awards, The IPA Effectiveness Awards.



4.8 GWR welcomes the arrival of Cornish Pasty Week

GWR supported the first ever Cornish Pasty Week in February.

We celebrated Cornwall's culinary contribution to the world by transporting Mr and Mrs Pasty to London for a week of activities promoting the history and heritage of the humble pasty.

GWR sources as much of our food and drink from within 15 miles of our railway. This means we can offer our customers quality products, specifically produced for GWR, while supporting the local and regional economy. This includes tea and wine from Cornwall, water from Wales and cake from Berkshire.



4.9 Accolades for the GWR Pullman Service

Our unique onboard restaurant service has been placed among the top 8% of restaurants across London.

Customer ratings and plaudits on the TripAdvisor website led to a "Certificate of Excellence" with a score average of 4.5 out of 5. Customers comments included "The Great Days of Train Travel are still alive on GWR" and "Staff all very warm, genuine and caring. Food superb quality, plentiful and beautifully silver served".



Pullman dining is offered on ten services a day on South Wales and Devon and Cornwall routes. Our new Intercity Express Trains all have full sized kitchens and Pullman dining will continue on this next generation of trains.

4.10 New Intercity Express Train named after Paddington Bear author Michael Bond

In January 2018, we named one of the first of our new Intercity Express Trains after Paddington Bear author Michael Bond.

The train, 800010, was unveiled by his daughter Karen Jankel at a special event on Platform 1, London Paddington, near to where her father's creation first arrived in London.

Michael's wife, Sue Bond, was also in attendance at the ceremony held on Wednesday 10 January, three days before what would have been Michael's 92nd birthday.

The author, who died on 27 June last year at the age of 91, created the character Paddington based on a small bear he saw sitting all alone on a shelf in a London department store near Paddington Station on Christmas Eve 1956.

The first book was released on 13 October 1958 and since then more than 35 million Paddington books have been sold around the world. The characters have also been featured on television and in two feature films.



Karen Jankel, Michael's daughter said:

"Even before my father found the bear that inspired him to write his first book, he had decided that Paddington would make a good name for a character. He saw it every time he arrived at Paddington Station from his home town of Reading, so it is hard to imagine anything more appropriate than naming a train after him.

Michael strongly featured in our 100 Great Westerns campaign to name its new fleet after prominent Great Westerns, and was nominated by the public.

4.11 Extra cycle parking spaces to be introduced at Newbury Station

Newbury Station will gain 300 additional spaces along with bike pumps and repair equipment.

West Berkshire Council's Cllr Jeanette Clifford, Executive Portfolio: Highways and Transport, said:

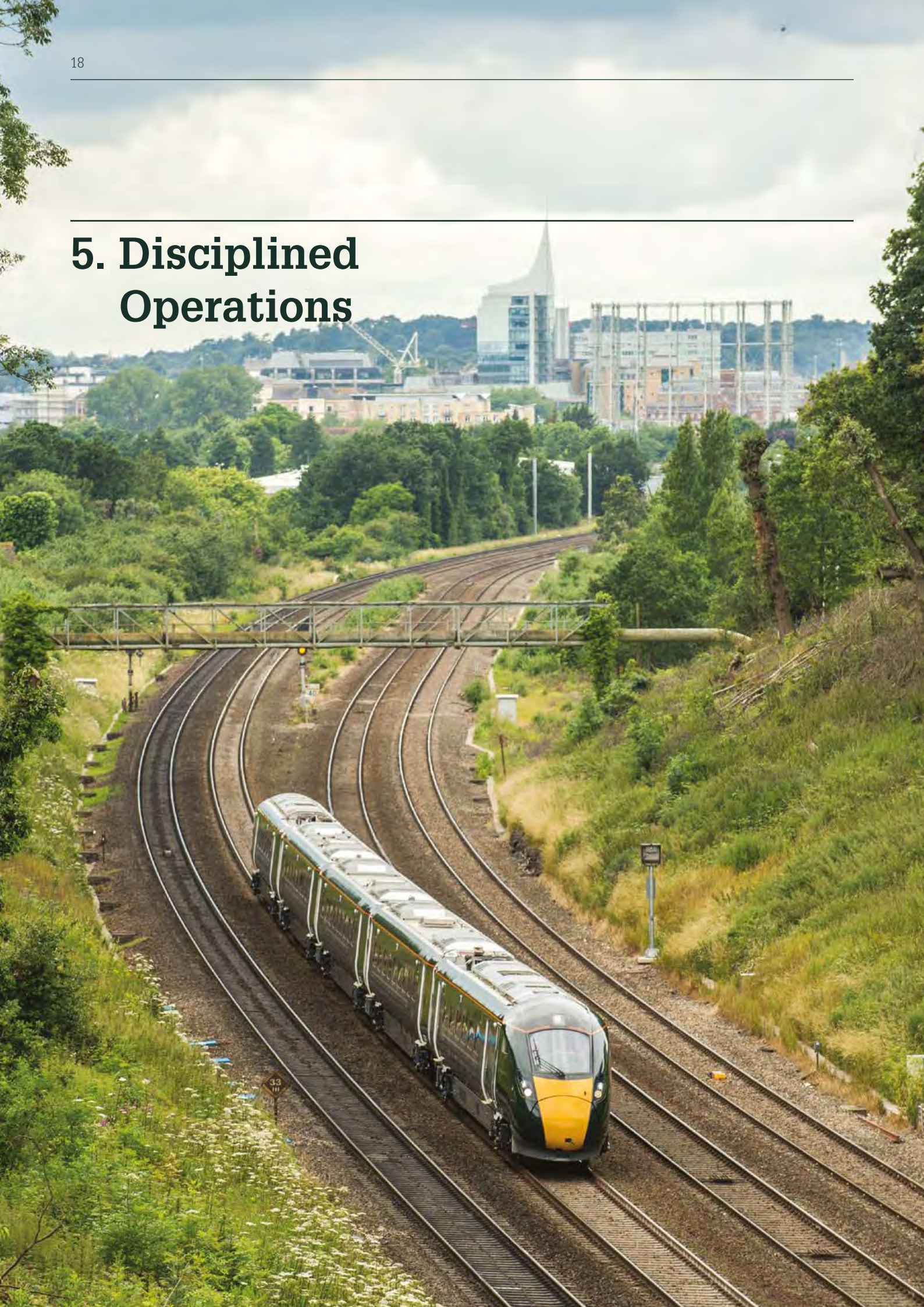
"This is excellent news and provides a boost to our plans for improving access to Newbury Station and promoting cycling in Newbury. The funding will deliver first-class cycling facilities at the station and encourage those who live or work in the town to make more journeys by bike.



"West Berkshire Council, through its Newbury Vision 2026, is seeking to create more flexibility for people to make journeys without relying on cars and this new cycling hub will help us to achieve that. We are very pleased that our partners share this vision, and to be working with them to deliver this exciting project."

A further two GWR stations will benefit from additional cycle funding including Didcot Parkway and Taunton.

5. Disciplined Operations



5.1 Performance Overview

Everyone at GWR recognises that we need to deliver better performance and reliability than we have done this year. We have clear, robust plans to address GWR issues, alongside the challenges that Network Rail are addressing.

This has not been a good year for performance. Part of this is a direct result of the amount of upgrade work and rolling stock changes being made over a short period of time on the Great Western. Next year customers will see the benefit but this year has been very difficult.

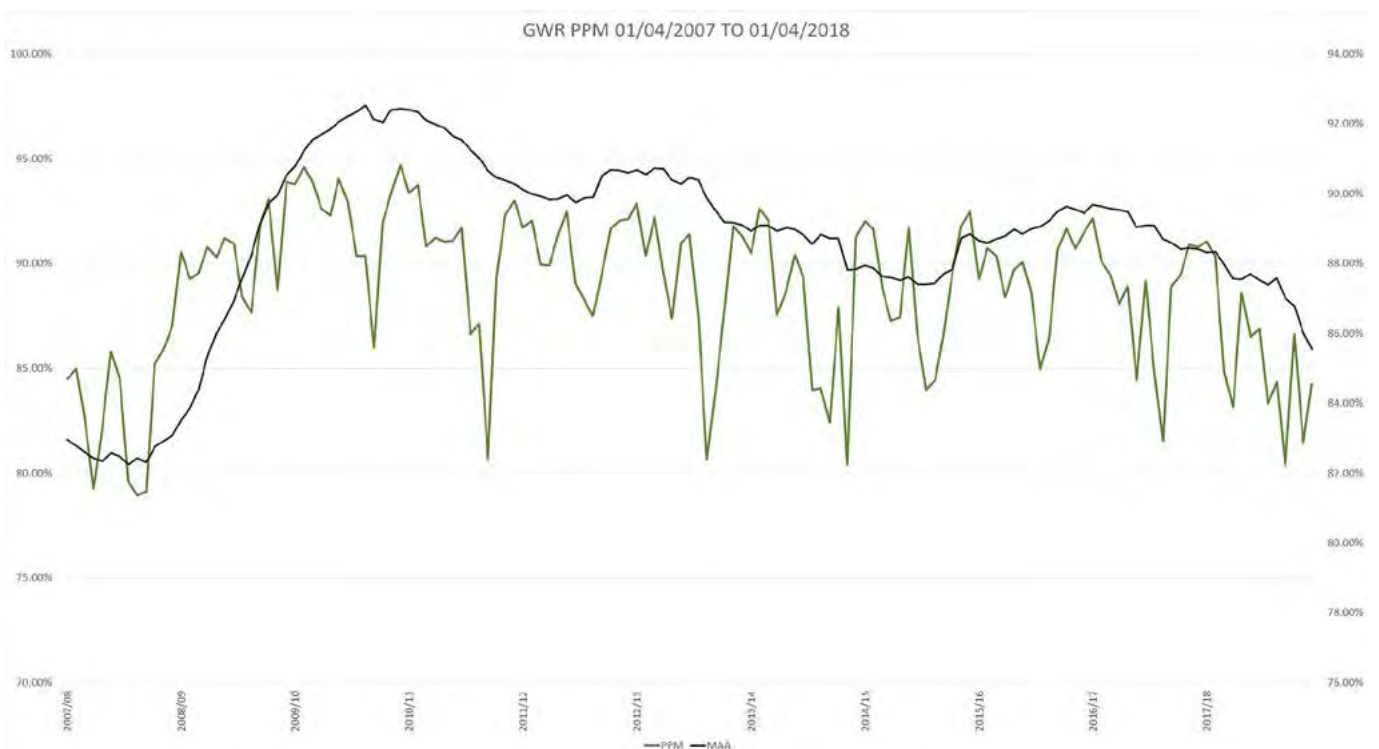
We recognise we need to do better. Some of the most painful delays and cancellations have been through availability of trained drivers. Customers ask why we did not think ahead and recruit more staff. We did, and we now have by far the biggest driver population GWR has seen in this or any franchise.

However, Intercity Express Train (IET) and Class 387 electric driver training started later than planned due to electrification delays. Availability of the track and trains for training issues gave us less time to complete the training and also meant that Thames Valley 387 training and IET training had to be done over the same time period. This was also the same time

that drivers were being trained to drive turbo trains over new routes in our Central and Wales region.

Training is now well underway and delays for drivers are starting to ease as training completes. However, our transformation from the oldest UK train fleet to the newest, means every route sees a new or upgraded train, and that means every one of our 1369 drivers needs to be trained.

One of the ways we responded to the compression in training time was by getting drivers to work rest days for training. This helped with the training, but reduced drivers' availability to work at other times, which has impacted weekend services in particular, and our biggest outstanding risk remains the reliance on voluntary Sunday working by drivers and the level of Rest Day Working we need to complete our training programme. We are trying to address both these issues through discussions with ASLEF.



On the fleet side we have seen more issues with the IET than we would have wished, Hitachi have been working on that and the trains are now starting to step up and operate at the improved reliability levels that we know they can hit.

The new routes in the West that the turbos are operating have created some challenges that required modifications to the doors. We also needed to replace engineers and fitters in our St Philips Marsh depot following several staff moving to the new Hitachi IET depot at Stoke Gifford and upskill depot staff to work on cascaded turbo services. We have also had to make modifications to the pantographs on our electric suburban services to suit the unique overhead line electrification system in use on the Great Western.

Our existing fleet has been impacted by the partial closure of our depot at Old Oak Common, (which needs to close to make way for HS2), the enforced move of Class 180s to Grand Central, the recruitment engineers by Hitachi and a lot less Turbos left in the Thames Valley. We have actively recruited to replace depot staff and are increasing the ratio of HST spare sets.

There have also been a number of delays and cancellations that were out of the control of the railway such as those caused by heavy snowfall, major storms and tragically by fatalities.

Added to the driver and fleet issues has been worsening performance from other operators which then impacts our services, and infrastructure issues. These can be caused by improvement work, and this year sees the greatest number of line closures to allow Network Rail to complete electrification through to Newbury and Cardiff, as well as completing work for Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) services to start. This can lead to over running work, or accidental damage. Crossrail works are almost complete and we expect infrastructure delays to reduce as a result.

Work on signalling projects such as those in the Thames Valley and Bristol should also help reduce delays from signal failures. That said, the signal changes at Bristol Temple Meads have led to reduced speed restrictions at the station. Network Rail are developing a solution to remove the restrictions. We work very closely with them and together we have developed a joint performance plan to reduce delays and cancellations.





Lord Faulkner of Worcester Chair of our Advisory Board

“Railways will remain safe in the midst of panic; and though times of pressure, severe, hazardous, ruinous pressure, have been felt in this country, and unfortunately must be felt again, yet it will only prove them to be part and parcel of the genuine sources of wealth and avenues for labour, in which this country lives and moves and has its being.”

This quotation appears in John Francis’s A History of the English Railway, published in 1851, and is attributed to “Anon”. The sentiments expressed then are as true today as they were over 160 years ago – not least because there is now a universal acceptance that our railways are an essential element in Britain’s economy and society. Whilst they have their critics - as they have in every year of their existence – no-one seriously argues that the country can manage without them.

On the GWR our colleagues are as aware of the challenges and difficulties facing the railways as anyone. Not only do they operate a large and busy network 363 days of the year, they have to do so in the midst of disruption caused by the implementation of an investment and construction programme which taxes the ingenuity and patience of staff and customers alike. The challenge is not made easier by the stop-start nature of the electrification programme, which should by now have brought the wires to Bath, Bristol, Oxford and Swansea.

Notwithstanding all these frustrations the company again did astonishingly well in the “Railway Oscars” - the 20th Rail Business Awards at the Hilton Hotel, Hyde Park in February. GWR won three awards and received a further “highly commended”. These were:

- The most prestigious award of the night as “Rail Business of the Year.
- The award for Safety and Security Excellence, which GWR won for their partnership with the Severnside Community Rail Partnership and a local school for “resolving anti-social behaviour by students”.
- The award for Rolling Stock Excellence for the introduction of electric trains to the GW main line.

GWR was also highly commended in the training and development excellence category for “Nurturing Great People”. This year’s successes followed on from Mark Hopwood winning the Industry Leader of the Year award in 2017.

It was a privilege for me again to attend the awards evening, and to be able to report to my fellow advisory board (AB) members how well GWR had done. The GWR AB is however much more than a company fan club. We have serious, and sometimes quite critical, discussions on how the company is performing, and we do not hold back if it’s necessary to speak frankly.

The advisory board members are drawn from across the areas served by the GWR, and from a range of business, academic, media, and local enterprise interests. This is my opportunity to say thank you to all of them for all the time and effort they put in to help create a better railway – and to GWR for engaging with us and allowing us to see the railway operations behind the scenes. I must also sadly record the death of Sir William McAlpine, one of our best known – and loved – members of the wider railway community, who served with us on the advisory board until his death in March this year.

5.2 Biggest ever signalling upgrade

From Friday 30 March to Tuesday 3 April 2018, Bristol was the scene for Network Rail's biggest-ever signalling upgrade. The £130m project was completed successfully and will enable Great Western Railway to deliver more frequent and quicker services to London, with more seats per train, from 2019.

The majority of the signalling upgrade in Bristol took place over the Easter weekend and involved more than 500 Network Rail and contractor staff working round the clock to decommission 1970s technology and install and test new digital equipment. It means signalling in the Bristol area is now controlled from a state-of-the-art signalling centre in Didcot, rather than from the 1970s signalling room behind Bristol Temple Meads station.

This is the third and largest instalment of a four-stage £250m project to entirely resignal Bristol Temple Meads and the surrounding area. The scale of the project meant major disruption for rail travellers into or through Bristol during the five days of work, and this in turn required both Network Rail and GWR to work very closely together in order to manage this.

Joint advertising and awareness-raising activity began in January 2018, with work to engage with local authorities and other stakeholders starting in the autumn of 2017. The main employers throughout the West of England, along with the four local authorities, tourism organisations and other stakeholders were targeted with relevant messages, aimed at

ensuring rail users knew enough to plan their journeys ahead of time, and understand the reasons behind the work and the benefits it would bring.

Mark Langman, Western route managing director said: "It is a great achievement to have delivered our biggest-ever signalling upgrade in just five days, enabling GWR to deliver more services, quicker journeys and more seats in Bristol from next year and more reliable services for CrossCountry to Birmingham and the north."

Mark Hopwood, managing director for GWR, said: "After much hard work over the longer weekend to keep people moving, and to ensure a smooth transition to new signalling systems, I am pleased Western route has been able to complete this work.

"The new signalling systems, once bedded-in should provide us with more reliable infrastructure, and with the continued delivery of new intercity express trains will enable GWR to offer seven trains an hour between Bristol and London Paddington, quicker journeys and more seats per train."





Dick Fearn Chairman, Western Route Supervisory Board

Progress

As the independent chair of the Western Route Supervisory Board, I am pleased to be able to report on its progress. Formed one year ago as the national pilot for route supervisory boards, it brings together the managing directors of the train operating companies on the route, the route representative from Transport Focus and the route managing director and route system operator from Network Rail, with the primary purpose of helping to better integrate and coordinate the efforts of all parties on the Western Route to improve the quality of service to customers.

Last autumn, six months after the new board had been formed, Network Rail, with the support of all the board members, commissioned Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) to independently review progress and to seek the views of all participants as to the board's effectiveness. The Western pilot was deemed a success and, as a result, several other supervisory boards have since been formed on other routes across the UK rail network, including the London North Western and Chiltern routes, the East Coast Main Line route, the Wales route and, most recently, the Anglia route.

Benefits

The prime focus of the board is passenger experience. As the Western Route works through its programme of route modernisation involving major infrastructure upgrades and the introduction of large new fleets of InterCity and suburban trains to increase service frequency and capacity, it is very important that the needs of passengers are given priority as the programmed works proceed. In 2017 the Western Route Supervisory Board members worked in close cooperation to ensure, for example, that the major infrastructure works at Paddington programmed to be carried out over Christmas 2017 were contained within the least number of days possible.

And again with great coordination of effort, straight after Christmas a new timetable and many new suburban electric trains were successfully introduced from the 2nd January 2018.

Furthermore, while the major modernisation programme work continues across the route, the board members are keen to also work together on smaller schemes, for example at stations, where further passenger benefits can be achieved at local level.

Expansion

The forthcoming introduction of Crossrail operations to the Western Route will further increase the number of train services for passengers and, at the same time, increase the need even more for close coordination between train operators and Network Rail. I am therefore very pleased that, to ensure all train operators are represented on the board, the managing directors of GWR and Heathrow Express have already been joined by the managing director of MTR Crossrail. This is very important because the transitional steps towards the full introduction of Crossrail services have already begun.

The managing directors or other representatives from Cross Country Trains and from the freight train companies operating on the Western Route are also welcome at the board and attend from time to time, so that the needs of their customers can also be taken into account in an integrated way.

As the independent chair, I greatly appreciate the support I have received from all the members of the board and I am confident that the board will continue to bring benefits to Western Route passengers and freight customers throughout 2018 and in the years ahead.

5.3 GWR Stakeholder Reputation Audit

Seven in ten stakeholders rate their experience of GWR as 'good'. Around three quarters (72%) rate their interactions and overall experience of GWR as 'good'. This represents a slight increase from 2016 (69%).

These findings indicate an overall improvement in the number of stakeholders reporting positive experiences of GWR from earlier waves of research (53% in 2011 and 58% in 2014).



Those who know about the Network Rail/GWR Alliance are more likely to rate their experience of GWR as good (83%), than those who have never heard of the Alliance (57%), possibly indicating a positive reaction among stakeholders to this decision.

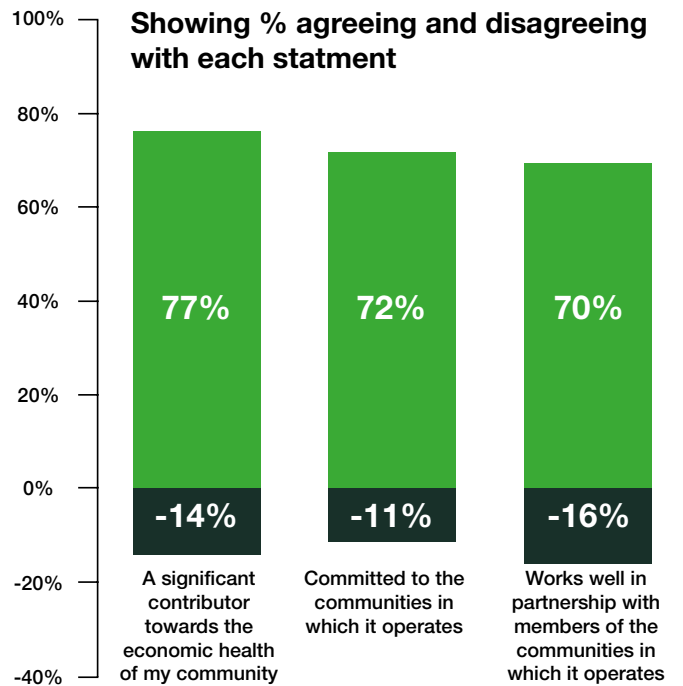
While there has been a slight increase in those saying that GWR is going in the wrong direction (16% vs. 12% in 2016), the proportion of stakeholders saying that GWR is currently on the wrong path remains broadly consistent with 2016 levels (11% vs. 9%).

Overall, stakeholders' opinions of GWR are positive, with broadly similar proportions of stakeholder saying that they agree with each statement as in 2016. Around four in five (83%) stakeholders agree that GWR is committed to investing in rail improvements, is committed to the franchise for the long term (80%), and is committed to working collaboratively with the rail industry to deliver improvements for customers (77%).

We value our partnership and recognise the role we play in local and regional economies. We are committed to joint working and will continue to develop and deepen relationships across all our routes.

5.4 GWR's interactions with local communities

Overall, stakeholders continue to hold strongly positive opinions of GWR's interaction with local communities, with broadly similar proportions agreeing with each of the statements relating to community and local economic support.



5.5 Franchise Extension

Secretary of State for Transport Chris Grayling announced in November 2017 that the current GWR franchise would be extended by 12 months to March 2020.

At the same time, he announced a consultation into a new franchise to run for two years, with the option of a two year extension. Rail minister at the time Paul Maynard MP said: "We are investing in the biggest modernisation of the railways for over a century. Working with Great Western Railway, we are bringing the very latest in rail technology to some of the world's oldest lines, putting passengers first so that they benefit from a transformational programme of upgrades as quickly as possible.

The benefits of these improvements will be felt right across the franchise area. But as the franchise continues to grow into the 2020s, we want to ensure every line, station and passenger remains central to the train operator's strategy. This consultation asks passengers how they want their railway to look into the 2020s and beyond and how it will best deliver for them."

The consultation closed in February with over 800 responses and the Department for Transport are now reviewing responses.



5.6 Schumann at the Station

Reading's Aldworth Philharmonic Orchestra (APO) stepped out from the comfort of the concert hall to present a free public event at Reading station on 22 July.



Reading's Aldworth Philharmonic Orchestra (APO) stepped out from the comfort of the concert hall to present a free public event at Reading station on 22 July.

The *Route to the River: Schumann at the Station* event saw performances of two Schumann symphonies, conducted in part by GWR employee and APO Musical Director Andrew Taylor, alongside the world premieres of two commissions by young composers - including one of the winners of the recent Reading Cultural Awards, Alice Knight.

This was one of a number of events at stations to support communities and add to the customer experience, concerts were also given at Tiverton Parkway by the Two Moors Festival with many, many charity events right across the network.

5.7 Preventing accidents and ill health at work

This year, The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) awarded Great Western Railway a Silver Award in its prestigious annual Occupational Health and Safety Awards.

The Awards recognise a company's commitment to continuously improving accident and ill health prevention at work and provide a visible testimony of GWR's commitment to safety.



The RoSPA Health & Safety awards are held every year and are internationally recognised and much sought after. These awards are not rail industry specific and organisations are judged from different industry sectors, many are well-known household and high street names as well as global brands. Success in these awards is regarded as a high accolade and showcases our commitment to the safety of our colleagues, stakeholders, competitors and customers.

Submissions focus on a number of points, including the role of directors and senior managers in leading health and safety within the organisation, how the organisation engages employees with health and safety, how accidents are investigated and how lessons are learnt following on from them, amongst other things.

The submission is then judged independently by a panel of experts, including experts from the Institution of Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH) and The National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH). Organisations that maintain high standards in consecutive years can win gold medals, president's awards and orders of distinction.

GWR believes that colleagues should have an understanding of their responsibilities when it comes to health and safety. As a result, we run IOSH Managing Safety courses throughout the year to up-skill colleagues contributing to their professional development.

Over the last year we have seen significant improvements in our colleague lost time and major accident KPIs, unfortunately we have not seen the same improvements in our customer accident KPIs which will be an area of focus over the coming year.



Anthony Smith
Chief Executive of Transport Focus

We continue to work closely with Great Western Railway (GWR), providing independent, evidence-based insight and advice from the passenger perspective.

As ever, we focus on the things that passengers tell us matter most, from performance to continuing to help GWR improve its complaints handling process.

As the upgrade programme continues apace and the promised benefits of new or cascaded trains and greater capacity are starting to arrive, the challenges of delivering this massive investment are also apparent.

The results of our latest National Rail Passenger Survey (Autumn 2017) found that 79 per cent of GWR passengers were satisfied with their journey overall. This is lower than previous years and reflective of the ongoing challenges that face GWR and its passengers at present, particularly with performance - the most important driver of satisfaction for GWR passengers.

With the intensity of engineering work needed to deliver the investment, we have continued to work with GWR to understand passenger expectations and experiences. This helps drive continuous improvement in the way disruptive line closures are carried out.

We worked with GWR and Network Rail to run a joint industry workshop, exploring how to improve the passenger experience during planned engineering work. We were pleased to see a genuine commitment, at all levels, to find further practical improvements for passengers. This commitment is invaluable as the scale of engineering work continues to grow over the year.

Our dedicated stakeholder manager has also continued to represent the voice of the passenger on the Western Route Supervisory Board, working to inform and influence on behalf of passengers. We look forward to continuing to work together to improve passengers' experiences.

5.8 The Transformation of Great Western

The Transformation team have overseen a multitude of projects over the past 12 months, working closely with Network Rail to deliver key infrastructure benefits and managing the associated temporary disruption to our train services.

The widening and extending of the platforms at Bath Spa took place in April, and the running lines between Swindon and Chippenham were lowered between May and July so that Overhead line equipment (OHLE) could be installed beneath a number of listed bridges.

Flood alleviation work was carried out near Chippenham in July, as was a major track remodelling scheme in the Oxford area which reduced the potential for delays.

A new platform was built at Bristol Parkway during the autumn, and the other platforms there were lengthened in preparation for the roll-out of IETs.

The OHLE in the Reading area was commissioned over two weekends in September and October, and over Christmas we saw significant station works between Slough and London linked to the launch of Elizabeth line services, as well as the transfer of some stations.

The team also provided a readiness governance service for the 2 January timetable change when Class 387 Electrostar trains began running to Didcot Parkway.

If anything, 2018 is presenting an even greater set of challenges, with engineering access required by Network Rail reaching unprecedented levels. The electrification of the route from Reading to Newbury, re-establishing four running lines between Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol Parkway, the major resignalling project in the Bristol area and the progression of electrification along the South Wales main line are all critical components of our ability to provide new trains, more seats and faster journeys from early 2019.

The team will also be overseeing changes in the delivery of Heathrow Express services. Whilst the branding, commercial aspects, revenue and ticket pricing will remain the responsibility of Heathrow Airport, GWR will provide the crew and the rolling stock.



6. Great People



6.1 HR team celebrate prestigious award

At this year's HR industry's Personnel Today awards, we won the HR Impact award in recognition of the success of our HR strategy, to attract, retain and support colleagues during a prolonged period of transformation of our business.

This comprehensive strategy covers recruitment, learning and development and our colleagues' experience, to employee and union relations, our diversity and inclusion activities and the health and wellbeing of colleagues.

The award recognises our sector-leading approach to recruitment and retention, including being the first UK train company to map Operational Apprentices to the Passenger Transport Service Operations Apprenticeship, our Investors In People (IIP) Gold Status, our ongoing Leadership Development and Great Experience Makers (GEMs) programmes and talent management and formal performance and development (PDR) processes.

We also reduced absence loss, helped managers improve short and long term sick leave rates and rolled our health and wellbeing support to firstline colleagues; and we established an Inclusion Action Board to help strengthen our efforts to improve diversity and inclusion within GWR.



On receiving the award Tracey Coleman said: "Our entire HR team deserves this award, which recognises all their hard work to improve our support for GWR colleagues during time of significant change.

"The fact that we are showing improvements in all areas of HR activities shows we are on the right track and will encourage us to go even further in supporting colleagues and making GWR a great place to work over the coming years."

6.2 20th Annual Rail Business Awards

We were delighted to attend the 20th annual Rail Business Awards, where we won three awards – most notably for Rail Business of the Year.

We also received the top awards for Rolling Stock Excellence, for our introduction of electric trains to the London and Thames Valley; and Safety and Security Excellence for work with Severnside Community Rail Partnership to improve journeys on Severn Beach Line.



Over the last year we have seen massive changes to our operations and fleet, all with the customer in mind – and these changes would simply not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of colleagues up and down our network, as well as our close working partnership with Network Rail.

We were also shortlisted for the Training and Development Excellence award for our Leadership Academy GEMs training programme – a course designed to help colleagues work together to make great experiences for our customers.

Although we still have some way to go to deliver the level of service we know our customers want to see, we are very pleased that we can be recognised in this way by our industry peers.

6.3 GWR Excellence Awards

This January saw the fifth anniversary of our annual Excellence Awards dinner, recognising great people who have made a real difference to our colleagues, customers and business.

Colleagues from across the network were nominated for going above and beyond in nine categories, representing each of our values, plus some extra commendations.

Special guest Sue Perkins hosted the event at the City Centre Marriott hotel in Bristol. She said: “It’s clear GWR has more than its fair share of talented, committed and dedicated colleagues, you should all feel very proud.”



Old Oak Common (London) and Landore Depot (Swansea) teams received a standing ovation after they were presented with special recognition awards for their commitment and professionalism during 2017, which saw both depots prepare for closure as HST trains leave or fleet as new IET trains arrive.

6.4 GWR open day scoops prestigious industry award and raises over £50,000 for charity

GWR's Legends of the Great Western Open Day at Old Oak Common depot scooped a silver Golden Whistle award in the Outstanding Team category.

Over 7,000 attended the depot open day held in September 2017, helping to raise over £50,000 for children's charity Place2Be, earning silver in the Institute of Railway Operators Golden Whistle awards in the Outstanding Team category.

The Golden Whistle Awards are dedicated to people who work in or interface with railway operations, recognising those who have gone above and beyond expectations to deliver excellence in railway operations.

The open day saw a unique collection of trains and locomotives, both old and new with a centrepiece line-up of traction spanning all 111 years of the depot and made the Great Western 'God's Wonderful Railway'.

In total £50,366 was raised for the depot's chosen charity Place2Be, which provides mental health support for children in schools and whose patron is HRH The Duchess of Cambridge.



Cllr Geoff Brown Portfolio Holder for Transport, Cornwall Council

This is a very exciting time for rail users in Cornwall as our network sees the greatest change for decades. Later this year our current fleet of High Speed Trains will be replaced by the new and technically advanced Hitachi Intercity Express Trains which will increase capacity, improve reliability and provide a higher standard of service for all passengers on their journeys to and from Cornwall. Meanwhile the High Speed Trains, the stalwart of the main line for 40 years will be upgraded, including automated doors and shortened to four passenger carriage units, to create the new 'Castle Class' trains. They will then return to the network to take advantage of the increased capacity on the mainline created by the signalling improvements currently being delivered by Network Rail, providing a regular half hourly service between Penzance and Plymouth which will form a vital part of Cornwall's new integrated public transport system.

The gradual introduction of the new Sleeper carriages is also nearing completion and will offer the very best overnight journey to and from London for business people and visitors alike. These units will be complemented by the new Sleeper Lounges currently being constructed at Paddington, Truro and Penzance ensuring that after a pleasant nights sleep, passengers arrive fresh for the day ahead.

Cornwall Council are proud to have worked with GWR and Network Rail to deliver the new multi-million pound rail depot at Long Rock. This has not only allowed all the sleeper maintenance to be transferred to Cornwall, along with well paid and highly skilled jobs, but also facilitates the delivery of the new interchange for High Speed 2 on the site of the former sleeper maintenance depot just outside of London.

These are very significant improvements and the investment by GWR into the economy of Cornwall is most welcome. It marks a clear commitment to rail travel in the southwest so it is no wonder that rail passenger numbers are growing faster in the SW than anywhere else in Britain.

6.5 Apprenticeships

Our programme of apprentices continued with a further 22 apprentices starting in the business late August. The Operations apprentices are based in Gloucester, Truro and Reading. Engineering Apprentices based at Bristol and Reading, and finally Aspire management apprentices based at Paddington, Swindon, Bristol and Exeter.



Our graduating apprentices this year once again achieved 100% success rate for completion, which is 31% above the national average, a fantastic result. Our continued partnership with Exeter college is proving a great benefit to all levels of the apprentice programme.

This year we saw our first cohort of apprentices complete their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award at a ceremony at St James Palace. The DofE Business Gold enables GWR in a channelled approach to help our local communities delivering over 600 hours during the volunteering element. The physical element is great for the apprentices' wellbeing, and the challenge of the expedition pushes many of our young people to achieve goals they would have never contemplated. The business skills element enables GWR to deliver focused additional skills training to apprentices to build their knowledge of the business area outside the day to day operational railway industry. The programme dovetails our vision of delivering quality young talent into the business. Apprentices work with managers in the business to deliver safety talks.

The Railway safety box process has delivered to over 3800 school children across the network area, culminating in over 500 hours of community engagement. We continued the successful programme in the west country this year, and have also in partnership with Chiltern Trains and the Oxfordshire fire brigade commenced a programme in the Oxford area.

6.6 Great Experience Makers

Great Experience Makers is our ambitious customer experience training programme bringing together colleagues from across the business as one team. Since its launch, 3241 colleagues and 894 managers have attended helping us to give customers the best possible experience travelling us.



6.7 Leadership Development Programme

GWR's Leadership Development Programme was recognised at the Personnel Today and CIPD Awards in 2017.

The programme was designed around 3 “step-up” areas of leadership that help drive transformation; accountability and challenge, building powerful relationships and engaging and inspiring our people and included a blend of individual needs analysis, 5 x 1-day workshops, virtual learning, action learning sets and coaching. After the first tranche of 300 managers had completed the programme the business results were encouraging with improvements in GWR's employee survey relating to manager behaviour and tangible outcomes. A second tranche of 140 managers completed the programme during 2017.

We know that friendly, well trained staff make a major impact on the quality of our customers journeys. We have invested in major training programmes to empower and support colleagues throughout the business to do all they can to put customers first, and make sure they always have the best possible journey experience.

7. Keeping Our Communities Prospering



7.1 Customer & Communities Improvement Fund

GWR made £2.3m of funding available over three years in the shape of their Customer & Communities Improvement Fund. Match funding increased the total to £4.7m. Schemes must demonstrate a tangible improvement to the local community, address an area of social need, and have a link to the Great Western network.

Year two saw a total of £1.3m was invested in community projects throughout the year. Some of these included illuminated timetable boards on the Avocet Line, an on-train musical project on the Looe Valley Line, training for young people with learning disabilities to help enter the workplace, and phase 2 of the My Train Wales project, an educational programme throughout South West Wales that aims to educate young people and vulnerable adults on rail safety and how to use the train.

In Year 3 of the programme which runs from 1 April 2018 to March 31 2019, 34 projects have been selected, with a total of £2.6m to be invested in community projects across the network. This was to be the final year of the CCIF programme, but with our franchise extension we hope with DfT support we can add a further year.



GWR

Customer & Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF)

Year 1
Ashchurch
St James
Polsloe
Brunel
Marlow
Cam & I
Budding
Moreton
Frome S
Hannah
Keyns

Key:

- Year 1 (station) ●
- Year 2 (station) ●
- Year 3 (station) ●
- Years 1 & 2 (station) ●
- Years 1 & 3 (station) ●
- Years 2 & 3 (station) ●
- Years 1, 2 & 3 (station) ●
- Year 3 (line) —
- Years 2 & 3 (line) —
- Years 1, 2 & 3 (line) —

Year 2 Projects

- Illuminated Timetable Boards for the Avocet Line - £17,600
- BAPP Life Skills - £12,185
- St Germans Station Access Road - £6,000
- St Germans Car Park - £179,000
- Moreton-in-Marsh Waiting Room - £471,790
- Get on Track - Swindon - £36,627
- Exmouth Estuary Journeys - £19,445
- Kintbury Public Conveniences - £12,000
- All Down Hill From Here - £6,000
- Accessible By Train - £6,000
- Barnstaple Gateway Enhancement Scheme - £45,000
- United Response - £102,603
- Roche Station Pedestrian Access - £18,000
- Cycling Connectivity and Accessibility - £22,500
- Severn Beach Station Local Access Study - £20,000
- Lyde Road Pedestrian and Cycle way - £100,000
- My Train Wales - Phase 2 - £43,600
- Strawberry Line Cafe - £1,800
- Surrey Community Rail Partnership - £30,000
- Keyham and North Prospect Family Explorers - £2,100
- Ageing-Well Community Transport Scheme - £4,070
- Melkham Station Northern Access Pedestrian Route - £75,000
- Theale Integrated Transport - £61,000
- Westbury Cycle Improvements Study - £25,919

Year 2 total: £1,318,239

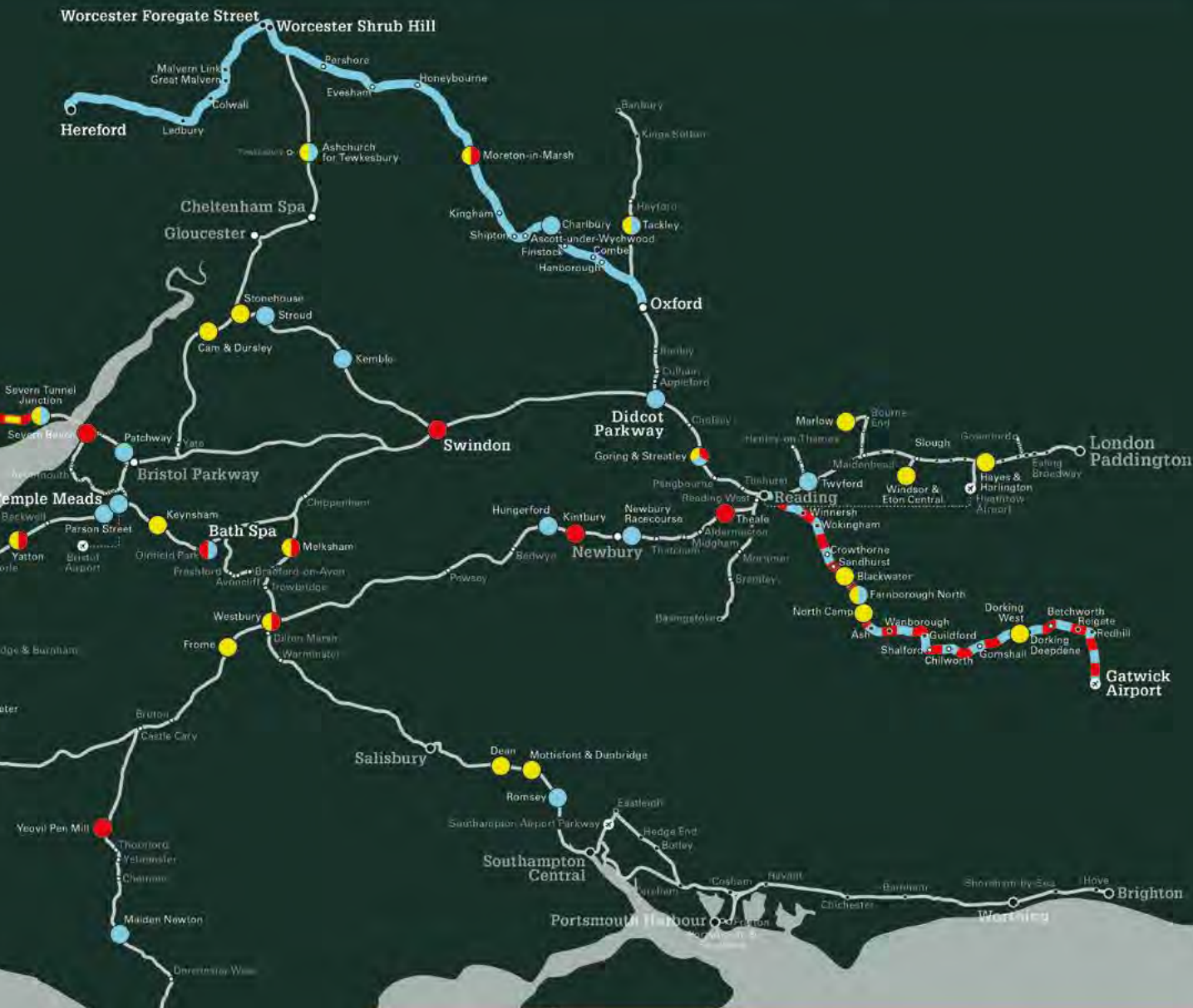


Projects

Arch Station Improvements – £17,645
 Ashchurch Park Station Improvements – £32,113
 Bath Bridge Station Improvements – £57,979
 Bath Heritage – £5,000
 Bath Branch Travel Plans – £20,000
 Dursley Station Enhancement – £12,000
 Dursley Brunels – £21,126
 Moreton-in-Marsh Study – £10,071
 Reading Station Access – £16,478
 Reading to Swindon Rail – £72,560
 Swindon Station Enhancement Community Project – £6,250

Hayes & Harlington Historical Improvements – £5,985
 Goring & Streatley Access Improvements Study – £8,000
 Dorking West Station Access – £12,400
 Severn Tunnel Junction Car Parking – £25,000
 Weston Milton & Yatton Improvements – £48,136
 Cycling at Windsor & Eton – £8,750
 Bridgwater Station Community Room Study – £7,500
 Cultural Diversity & Rail Study – £25,000
 Cycle Access in Slough – £105,000
 Somerset Rural Youth Project – £25,000
 My Train Wales - Phase 1 – £47,720
 St Germans Station Building Survey – £7,826

Stonehouse Station Link – £9,000
 Blackwater Valley Cycle Access – £14,741
 Tackley Station Community Partnership – £37,388
 Explore Dawlish Warren – £50,000
 Dean, Romsey, Mottisfont and Dunbridge – £39,463
 Convenience for the Community Study – £13,276
 Melksham Station Access – £10,000
 Days out in the West of England – £25,000
 Vale of Glamorgan School Education – £10,000
 Wheels for All – £9,600
 Westbury Station Access Improvements – £16,000
Year 1 total: £832,007



Year 3 Projects

Passenger Information at Polsloe Bridge – £90,088
 Cycle Hub at Cardiff Central – £200,000
 Gateway to the Cotswolds – £15,000
 Get On Track - Newport – £29,390
 Dawlish Play Park – £238,212
 History of the Looe Valley Line – £48,000
 Didcot Railway Centre Access – £9,800
 Exeter St David's Gateway to College – £110,000
 Exeter St David's Neighbourhood Warden – £29,000
 Farnborough North Welcome Project – £1,000
 Goring & Streatley Cycle Storage – £10,500
 Hungerford Passenger Shelter – £28,388
 Kemble Station Footpath – £16,000
 Key4Life Bristol – £170,000
 Looe Community Notice Board – £1,000
 Maiden Newton Lighting – £35,000
 Safe Footpath to Rogiet – £60,000
 North Downs Education – £50,000
 Plymouth Mayflower 400 Trails – £440,550

Patchway Station Vision Study – £21,000
 My Train Wales - Phase 3 – £49,400
 Stroud Station Gateway – £23,000
 Tackley Community Outreach – £15,000
 Taunton East & West Deane Way – £5,000
 Romsey Cycle Storage – £20,000
 Days Out By Train - Mapping Access – £14,018
 Cycle Hire Scheme at Swansea – £20,700
 Vintage Trains Educational Coach – £25,000
 Newbury Racecourse Station Enhancements – £220,000
 Twyford Cycle Parking – £20,000
 North Cotswold Line Task Force – £232,000
 Saltash Station Building Renovation – £347,314
 Parson Street - Legacy, Today, and Tomorrow – £13,850
 Ashchurch Realtime Passenger Information – £5,000

Year 3 total: £2,613,210

7.2 Community Rail Partnerships

Three Rivers Rail Partnership

As in previous years, the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership enjoys close Partnership working, building on recent successes at Romsey, Mottisfont & Dunbridge and Dean rail stations.

Our main focus during the past year has been improvements to the station path at Romsey rail station, together with the unveiling of the Romsey WW1 Commemoration Stone situated at the front of the station, in full public view on the station approach.

For many years, there had been an aspiration to upgrade walking and cycling routes to Romsey rail station. The issue was highlighted as part of the original Station Travel Plan undertaken by the Partnership, in liaison with the Train Operator, Test Valley Borough and Hampshire County Councils. A scheme to upgrade the path to the surrounding area was identified and designs prepared.

Nick Farthing Chair of the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership project managed the scheme and together with funds from the GWR Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF), the Partnership and the Local Authorities, we have been able to get the path relaid and made more usable, providing a very useful link from the station to the Signal Box museum, surrounding neighbourhood and the wider Community.

In addition to the path and with the kind financial support of Romsey British Legion and original stonework by local artist and sculptor Caroline Dear, and again joint funded through the GWR CCIF, a World War One Memorial Stone has been placed on Station Approach.

The stone has been carved out of Welsh slate with an overall poppy motif. It has created a handsome addition to the Romsey sculpture trail, having already been featured at the Chelsea Flower Show.

The Memorial Stone complements a WW1 commemorative series of displays at Romsey Railway Station Waiting Room put together by the Three Rivers volunteers, in which pupils from The Romsey School have also participated. The young people have been researching the stories of Romsey men who gave their lives in the First World War.

The Memorial Stone was officially unveiled by Brigadier David Harrison Hampshire President of the British Legion during a ceremony on 10 November 2016.

Special mention is made on behalf of our stalwart Volunteers Shirley Rogers and Simon Scott who were instrumental in getting the stone project underway, and raising funds for Combat Stress. Furthermore, we are delighted to report that the project to create the WW1 Memorial and to upgrade the Path, attained 1st Place in the 2017 ACoRP Annual Awards "Most Enhanced Station Buildings and Environs" category, of which we are all very proud.



Further CCIF funds were allocated for Community Notice Boards to be installed at Dean and Mottisfont and Dunbridge Stations which have been well received by locals and rail passengers alike.

There is also ongoing great volunteering work at Dean and Mottisfont and Dunbridge Stations regarding litter picking, cleaning, art and planting, which continue to keep these rural stations tidy and attractive. We have this year installed new planters at both stations, and changed the artwork at Mottisfont and Dunbridge Station where the older "Shaun the Sheep" murals were put out to pasture and replaced with images of local River Test fish created in association with local Lockerley Primary School.

The Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership

The railway from Bristol to Weymouth is supported at multiple levels by its local communities. Seven local authorities along the route come together with the joint objective of increasing rail passenger journeys to contribute to their sustainable transport objectives.

They fund promotion of the 87-mile line and its twenty destinations jointly with Great Western Railway, enhanced by a contribution from Cross Country Trains. Local Town and Parish councils, community tourism groups, businesses, event organisers and volunteer groups contribute substantially to our work in various ways, including developing their own initiatives which are supported through the partnership's Community Projects Grant Fund.

The Heart of Wessex Line website promotes this scenic route and its access to beautiful countryside, including two UNESCO World Heritage destinations, two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, historic villages and towns, cities and coast. Insider information from local contributors and bespoke practical guides help visitors find their way from stations, and mutual links have been made with local businesses and attractions to encourage their customers to visit by rail. The Bristol to Weymouth Line Guide published three times a year includes ideas for days out each season, together with an accessible, easy to read large print timetable. Working closely with local event organisers to promote train travel also brings additional opportunities, such as the GWR sponsored "Minerva Owls of Bath" that will appear in Paddington, Bath Spa and around the region this summer, including Emma, the Community Rail Owl!

The partnership acts as a conduit for the ideas and aspirations of local communities, and almost all of the stations have been adopted by local voluntary groups who have created gardens, help to keep the stations clean and welcoming and have initiated local projects to improve customer facilities, access and information. The Wessex

Wanderers attract additional new visitors with their annual programme of free guided walks, and altogether 13,000 hours of voluntary time and talent are gifted to the line and its stations each year. Local needs are collected up and filtered through to the train operators with the now well established "Community Wish List" of aspirations for both local rail users and visitors. This list is used periodically to select priorities for Great Western Railway's annual community rail investment, and to respond to funding opportunities from third parties. This combination of locally focused promotional work and volunteer contributions to station enhancements undoubtedly contributed to the tripling of passenger journeys on the Heart of Wessex Line between 2003 and 2015, without any increase to the service provision. Growth slowed over the following two years, and 2017/18 saw journey numbers declining for the first time, but for every 100 passengers in 2003 there are now 290 on the same number of trains - a growth rate that far outstrips the national average.



TransWilts Community Rail Partnership

The TransWilts service from Swindon to Westbury had a strong year in 2017/18, with passenger numbers continuing to rise at Melksham station, which is served only by the TransWilts line. The side effects of late running major engineering elsewhere on the GWR network lead to delayed provision of additional capacity and significant reliability issues in the second half of the year. These immediate issues have been overcome.

TransWilts was delighted to welcome Rail Minister Paul Maynard in March 2017, Santa Claus in December 2017, and longer trains in January 2018. TransWilts looks forward to resumed growth and further positive developments on the line and service.

At the Railfuture awards, the Melksham Rail User Group won the “Best Campaign” award for their achievements in growing passenger numbers 8 fold in 4 years. At the ACoRP awards, TransWilts President Peter Blackburn was shortlisted for the coveted “Individual Contribution” award; over 20 years, Peter has been a stalwart figure in public transport promotion in Wiltshire and without his efforts the line and service would not be where it is.

From January 2018, peak trains are no longer crush loaded. Passenger numbers are growing again. Forecasts suggest that the line and service are still carrying only a small proportion of the potential traffic. Network Rail are extending platforms at Trowbridge, Melksham, and Dilton Marsh on the extended services to Southampton. A CCIF grant, with match funding from parishes and area board, is putting a Melksham Masterplan in place to produce a shovel-ready scheme. This includes improved station access, capacity and facilities. Work is underway with Wiltshire Council and Great Western Railway for a community building / daily presence, additional parking and bus turning, with seed funding help from an ACoRP DCRDF grant and other sources. Paul Johnson, Chair of TransWilts, is lead co-ordinator on our strategic work, including the master plan and community hut.

Late 2017 and early 2018 saw multiple consultations and forward discussions. Current services are based on the 2014-2016 trial which connects with other trains on the GWR network, but isn't operationally linked. By extending trains beyond Westbury to Salisbury, a better service can be provided on that section with efficiency gains so reduced costs, and those services naturally link on to Salisbury to Southampton (Central and Airport) services. Through services will also enhance passenger flows with new direct journeys such as from Swindon and Chippenham to the major regional

Airport at Southampton. GWR and South Western Railway are working together on the analysis of this passenger flow; the analysis is a requirement of the SWR franchise which started in August 2017. Wiltshire Council, together with partners, is leading a line capacity study to evaluate enhancement needed for a robust hourly service which is probable next stage.

Volunteers continue to provide tender loving care at our stations, and to talk with passengers on the trains and people in the communities served to ensure we're all headed in the right direction. More formally, all passengers were surveyed over a three day period in October 2017 to inform Wiltshire Council and consultants for future planning. Bob Morrison continues to do a sterling job as Friend's secretary, producing a regular newsletter to keep our members informed.

TransWilts welcomed Horace Prickett, Portfolio holder for public transport, onto our board in 2017; Horace was already a well established and active member of the team, but this formality of appointment to the board strengthens TransWilts for the future. The TransWilts app, giving live local station and key destination data, has been a big success, and is now being rolled out by other Community Rail Partnerships across the GWR area too.



North Downs Line Community Rail Partnership

The Partnership is managed by the long-established Sussex Community Rail Partnership (SCRCP).



The North Downs Line Community Rail Partnership (CRP) was introduced to potential partners in the community at an event near Dorking in July 2017 and the inaugural steering group meeting was held in Guildford in October 2017.

The CRP is bringing the local community together with local authorities, GWR, education, business and environment representatives who are all working to improve the value of the line to the local community and visitors. This underpins the economic development and community support objectives of partners and will enhance the accessibility of the railway, the quality of the stations and the train services that operate along the line, to increase use by visitors and the local communities.

The line is operated by GWR and runs through the beautiful countryside that forms the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, within a short distance of the North Downs. It is a mecca for walkers and cyclists being close to the site of the 2012 Olympic cycling circuit at Box Hill and flanked by the North Downs Way and Greensand Way long distance paths.

Gatwick Airport Ltd. also welcomed the formation of the CRP. A spokesperson said "Gatwick is very keen to improve accessibility to and from the airport for passengers and staff. Any move directed towards more rail connections with Reading and the Midlands, which improvements along this line would bring about, are very welcome. We already work closely and successfully with SCRCP along their other community rail lines serving the airport."

The line begins at historic Reigate where you can discover the beauty and tranquillity of Reigate Castle and Priory Park, or history at Reigate Priory Museum, passes through Dorking and the stunning Surrey Hills to Guildford.

Denbies Vineyard, England's largest and most spectacular, is easily reached from Dorking Deepdene station and there are numerous walks in the Tillingbourne Valley accessible from the stations along the line.

Gomshall station provides the gateway to the picturesque villages of Shere and Abinger Hammer, a little further is Albury with its unique chimneys. Guildford, with its cobbled High Street, has all the charm of a country town, situated as it is on the River Wey and close to the Surrey Hills. It offers first class entertainment, excellent restaurants and superb shopping as well as history at Guildford Castle, the Great Tower.



Since its inception in July 2017 the partnership has:

- Galvanised and financially contributed to a study by Network Rail on level crossing safety which will be a further step towards facilitating a third train per hour on the line.
- Gained community input into improvements at Dorking Deepdene and Chilworth stations.
- Focused on encouraging train travel for leisure walking and cycling, with the creation of station information boards signposting the many routes in the Surrey Hills AONB and the North Downs Way.
- Published a line guide in April highlighting walks and places of interest around the Gatwick – Guildford part of the line
- Worked with stakeholders to develop plans for the section of line from Guildford to Reading, which are being taken forward in 2018-19

The Severnside Community Rail Partnership

The Severnside Community Rail Partnership is a Community Interest Company. We cover all the lines radiating from Bristol. The main aspect of our work is ensuring that the 25, mainly unstaffed, local stations provide a safe and welcoming environment.

Highlights of the Partnership's recent work included:-

Schools

The Partnership has worked closely with Cotham School and GWR to improve fare collection and student behaviour on the Severn Beach line. An innovative and award winning school travel scheme was introduced, with the season ticket printed directly on to the students ID lanyard and worn as part of the uniform. The ticket purchase price is charged to parents via the school electronic payment system. The school appointed a "Rail Rep" from each year group, who devised a student code of conduct for rail travel; students must comply with this to remain eligible for the special ticket. The scheme was judged to be the winner of the Safety and Security Excellence Category at the 2018 Rail Business Awards.

We continue to run a rail familiarisation programme for year-six primary school pupils building their confidence in using the railway as they progress to secondary school. Our arts schemes engage a range of primary and secondary school students, and in 2017 we welcomed for the first time a group of home- educated students who participated in a phase of the "City to Seaside" rail arts project; some of the images the students produced during the project were put on public display at Lawrence Hill station.

Safer and More Welcoming Local Stations

We cover 25 local stations, most of which are unstaffed or staffed on a part-time basis. Most of these stations have been adopted by local community volunteers who tend planters and promote good environmental practices. We encourage station entries to the Royal Horticultural Society "It's Your

Neighbourhood Awards" (IYN) scheme. The core pillars of IYN are community participation, environmental responsibility and gardening achievement – the perfect recipe for making a local station feel safer and more welcoming. The Partnership is delighted that Oldfield Park, Keynsham, Bedminster and Yatton stations, as well as all the Severn Beach line stations received level 5 "Outstanding" assessments in 2017, while many more local stations are well on their way to "Outstanding", having achieved a level 4 in 2017. Keynsham station, supported by Keynsham in Bloom, has seen considerable improvements; these were recognised by the station being awarded the Wheatley Trophy for Outstanding Landscaped Commercial Area.

Discover the Severn Beach line

A new website discoversevernbeachline.co.uk provides a set of resources for children of up to around 11 years old to enhance the experience of their journey along our unique local branch line. Designed in partnership with "A Forgotten Landscape" Heritage Lottery funded project and supported by the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, the beautifully illustrated activity packs encourage the exploration of local wildlife, places to play, stunning views and fascinating history surrounding each station.

Shelter for Passengers

The Partnership is keen to help provide more shelter for passengers at stations and in 2017, in association with South Gloucestershire Council, we helped sponsor and part-fund a modern canopy shelter covering the ticket vending machine and immediate waiting area at Yate station.



On Train Events

Train carriages can make great event space, and the Partnership was thrilled to host two “Fun Palace” events along the Severn Beach line during the world-wide weekend celebration of arts and science held in October. A photography workshop with Faye Joines was followed by a “Crowd on the Train” mental health awareness session, where passengers drew portraits and self-portraits on acetate which were displayed on the carriage windows to highlight the fact that in any crowd, or on any train, 1 in 4 people will have experienced mental health challenges. The year was rounded off with “Carols in the Carriage” between Avonmouth and Bristol Temple Meads, with fantastic music and singing led by members of the 2nd Wind All Stars Band.

Community Payback

Local stations benefit from offenders spending their community payback hours improving the station environment. A qualified supervisor, employed by the Partnership, brings groups of offenders to local stations once a week. During 2017 the group’s tasks included tending station gardens in North Somerset, assisted with painting of railings at Keynsham station and completing vegetation clearance at Avonmouth station, where the group are now assisting with the development of a community garden.

Major Improvements completed at Avonmouth station

The Severn Beach bound platform at Avonmouth station presented a dismal impression for those either alighting from Severn Beach bound trains or waiting for trains to Bristol. Industrial dereliction dominated the view, and the



anti-social use the derelict land at the rear of the platform caused anxiety to waiting passengers and was a deterrent to using the station. As the railhead for the Avonmouth-Severn Beach Enterprise Area, the station previously gave a very unfavourable impression to workers, visitors and potential developers.

With strong support from the local community, the Partnership put together proposals to achieve a much more welcoming, attractive and safer station which would encourage more passengers.

The improvements have included a new shelter (located to provide cover for arriving passengers waiting for the level crossing barriers to be raised), seating, lighting, planters and screen fencing. They have been funded and supported by Bristol City Council, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, Severnside Community Rail Partnership, Great Western Railway and Network Rail, with considerable assistance from the volunteer Champions of Avonmouth Station, Incredible Edible Bristol and Probation Service Community Payback.

A community raised bed garden is now being developed in a fenced off compound area of the platform.

To support employees working in the industrial areas of Avonmouth, the Partnership agreed with the SevernNet (which represents local employers) and GWR for a revision to the late evening train timetable to better fit with shift patterns.

Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership

The Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership (DCRP) brings together local authorities, GWR and others to support the counties' branch lines – benefiting local communities and the region's economy alike.

In 2017, the Partnership's marketing of the region's scenic branch lines included a series of high-impact new videos, a Poldark-themed app and a pair of 'Foodie Guides' to whet the appetite of potential passengers.

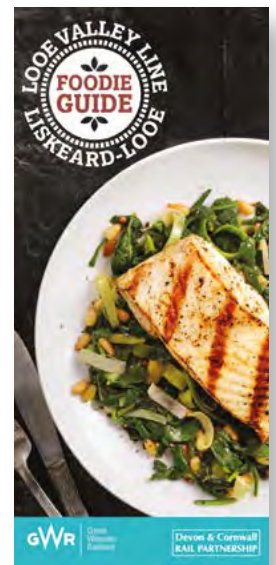
The videos focus on branch line day trips from the cities of Plymouth and Exeter. Local volunteer models were filmed on their rail adventures to the beach in Looe, the National Trust in the Tamar Valley and the Tarka Trail in Barnstaple.

A further film used the latest drone technology to capture the scenic Looe Valley Line from the skies. Watch all the films at dcrp.org.uk/videos. The videos were shared using Facebook advertising to reach more than 300,000 people in targeted towns and cities. Campaigns such as these have raised the profile of the Partnership's Great Scenic Railways Facebook page, which now has 8,000 followers.

The Partnership worked with Visit Cornwall to develop and launch the "Experience Poldark" app – using the popularity of the BBC's hit series to inspire more trips to Cornwall including by train. Downloaded more than 7,500 times in its first six months, the app was funded through the government's Heritage and Community Rail Tourism Innovation Competition.



Another new development was the launch of 'Foodie Guides' for the Tarka Line (Exeter-Barnstaple) and Maritime Line (Truro-Falmouth). The booklets highlight the award-winning eateries, local produce and foodie events within easy reach of stations along each line. 114,000 copies of the guides have been distributed in tourist leaflet racks across the South West and at stations from Penzance to London Paddington. An online version of each guide is also available at GreatScenicRailways.co.uk/food. The guides received excellent media coverage, with the launch event covered on Radio Cornwall and double-spread features achieved in two local and regional newspapers. The new marketing materials complement the Partnership's ongoing promotions. These include the GreatScenicRailways.co.uk website aimed at local day trippers and tourists from further afield which now attracts more than 150,000 visitors per year. In print, the Partnership produces a range of targeted publications aimed at holidaymakers, local residents, students and other audiences.



As well as marketing the branch lines, another major strand of the Partnership's work is to engage the local community. School children are introduced to the railway on their doorstep through taster trips and class projects. Businesses get involved in their local lines. University students are encouraged to not only explore the rail network of their adopted region but also to volunteer at stations. This takes place through the Partnership's long-running student volunteering project at Plymouth University, where the Partnership's team is based. Regular line forum meetings bring together local stakeholders to facilitate communication between the railway and the community.



Community engagement highlights from 2017 have included the award-winning Carbon Reduction Challenge schools project (see page 22) and the formation of a brand new Friends of Gunnislake Station group.

This 17-strong group of volunteers has already begun station gardening projects to brighten this gateway to the Tamar Valley. Meanwhile at Barnstaple station the Partnership has brought together organisations as wide-ranging as Barclays Bank, Network Rail and the Tarka Rail Association at work days to transform heavily overgrown planters and give passengers a much-improved station environment. A photo of one of the work days is on the front cover of this booklet.

Gardening projects are not the only way in which the Partnership improves stations. With funding from the Designated Community Rail Development Fund and other avenues, the Partnership helps deliver new and refurbished signage, art projects, access improvements and more. During the summer season on the Looe Valley Line, the

Partnership runs a ticket office at Looe station, and an information centre and shop at Liskeard.

The information centre received more than 830 visitors from all over the world in a six-week period.

The Partnership also works at a strategic level to help shape plans for the branch lines. In 2017 this included carrying out a survey of rail users and non-rail users on the Maritime Line to gauge their views about the train service and their future aspirations for the line. The survey received more than 1,500 responses. The results will feed into the work of the Maritime Line Forum which includes representatives of Cornwall Council, Great Western Railway, Network Rail, Falmouth and Penryn Town Councils and the Partnership.

On the Tamar Valley Line, the Partnership has worked with Cornwall Council to commission a survey into the economic benefits that the line brings to the local area, with the results to be reported in 2018.

7.3 ACoRP Community Rail Awards 2017

The Community Rail Awards, now in its 13th year, recognises the important and often unsung work carried out by Community Rail Partnerships, station friends and other community rail groups across the country.

The awards are about celebrating the passion and hard work of everyone involved in community rail. They help us to understand the breadth of work happening across this wonderful grassroots movement that is Community Rail, sharing good practice, and to spread the word.

They help build understanding of community rail's role in engaging local people with their railways, making a vital contribution to mobility, sustainability, prosperity, health and wellbeing, and encourage more people to get involved.

At the 2017 awards, Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership won First Place for their Carbon Reduction Challenge.

This programme of school engagement promoting awareness of rail as a form of sustainable travel. Involving the wider community by getting children to act as ambassadors at home and at school. The competition element helped children get adults involved.

Each school had a visit from Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership's development officer, who explained the project and played a specially commissioned video starring Coco the cat –which can be seen on YouTube.



The winning school measured the CO₂ savings made over a month of swapping car journeys for train journeys. The total was 1.2 tonnes, equivalent to driving from Cornwall to Scotland and back three times.

In addition to this, they also won first place for Best Marketing or Communications Campaign for Seize the Sunday, a campaign to make sure that a long-awaited trail of a year round half hourly service was a big success.



Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership also walked away with First Place for their War Memorial and Station Path. For their work with sculptor Caroline Dear to commemorate the 100th year anniversary of the First World War.

7.4 Heyford Station Gardens

The Friends of Heyford Station has always been a small group with limited resources. They focus their efforts principally on providing a clean, tidy, welcoming and safe station environment for all.

The group set themselves the challenge of dealing with the rather forlorn small bank adjacent to the right of the steps leading down to the station car park. A major drawback was the unusual shape and size of the area which also was on a 1 in 3 gradient.

Despite this, last autumn the group literally grasped the nettles and transformed the bank by planting it with a carefully- selected range of attractive low- maintenance bushes and shrubs chosen for their future height and spread and for their low maintenance at such a difficult location.



Janet Cooke Chief Executive of London TravelWatch

We meet regularly with Great Western to discuss planned investment work in London, the Inner Thames Valley and at Gatwick Airport, as well as to monitor current performance and customer service standards. It has been a challenging year for passengers in the London railway area who have had a raw deal on complaints but we agreed a remedial plan.

This year we focused on how Great Western will handle the handover of services to the Crossrail/ Elizabeth line train operating company, so that it has a seamless and well handled transfer benefiting passengers. Capacity on peak time trains is a key issue of concern for passengers in the wider London area and the introduction of new class 387 electric trains in the Thames Valley has transformed the passenger experience in this area.

Improving public transport access to London's airports is also a key concern of ours and so we welcome the commitment to improve the number of Great Western trains that serve Gatwick Airport on the route from Reading and Redhill. We also support the proposals for Western and Southern Rail Accesses to Heathrow.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with Great Western in the coming years to address the issues of concern to passengers.

7.5 Modeshift STARS

This year GWR have begun working with and supporting Modeshift STARS.

Modeshift STARS, which is supported by the Department for Transport, is the national school travel awards scheme that has been established to recognise schools that have demonstrated excellence in supporting walking, cycling and other forms of sustainable travel for the journey to and from school. 69 local authorities across the country participate in the scheme representing around 15,000 schools. Schools are able to gain accreditation, Bronze, Silver and Gold, in recognition of their efforts to promote sustainable and healthy journeys to school.

For more information visit www.modeshiftstars.org or contact starscomms@modeshift.org.uk



7.6 Sustainable Procurement

We have continued to address sustainability in our supply chains, assessing how each of our key suppliers can help us to meet our sustainability objectives.

Over the last year, we have re-tendered several major contracts making sure that the scope of those contracts helps us to meet the social, economic and environmental targets we have set ourselves and our supply chain partners through the GWR Sustainable Procurement Strategy.

We continue to develop and improve our procurement processes to incorporate through life social, environmental and economic considerations as we seek independent assurance of our procurement processes to ISO 20400 standards, the International Standard for Sustainable Procurement.

BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is the world's longest established method of assessing, rating, and certifying the sustainability of buildings. Two of our main engineering depots have been subject to major enhancement works. The Design assessment for our Penzance depot works is currently predicting a "Very good" score and our Exeter depot enhancement project is on target for achieving an "Excellent" score.

Building upon FirstGroup's accreditation to BS 11000 standard for Collaborative Business Relationship Management we are seeking accreditation to the new international standard ISO 44001 to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to help us and our business partners maximise the value of working closer together.

This year, GWR worked with approximately 2500 suppliers. Of those, approximately 1150 are classed as small enterprises (with less than 50 employees), 650 as medium enterprises (with between 50 and 250 employees) and 710 as large enterprises (with over 250 employees). As a company that supports apprenticeships and traineeships, we are delighted that our supply chain partners offer over 21,000 varying levels of apprenticeships from traineeships to higher apprenticeships.

7.7 Action for Children

A series of thought-provoking adverts will appear on buses and train stations around the UK, as part of a new campaign designed to draw attention to children's mental health.

The campaign, by Action for Children, highlights the fact that mental health issues, commonly identified in adults, often start in childhood.

It is hoped the campaign will raise awareness that mental health issues can begin to manifest in childhood. It is known that around three children in every classroom are suffering from a diagnosable mental health disorder.

The children and young people Action for Children supports have often experienced traumatic childhoods, making them even more likely to struggle with their emotional wellbeing. The charity says that if problems are spotted early, they can be reduced or even prevented with appropriate support.



This week, FirstGroup and Action for Children launched a three-year charitable partnership. Through the partnership, FirstGroup is donating advertising space across its UK transport network, helping to place the charity's message in front of millions of people.

The advertisements revolve around images of adults placed within a typically childhood scenario, such as a school classroom, creating a juxtaposition designed to make passers-by stop and think, and perhaps begin conversations with their own children.

Carol Iddon, Acting Chief Executive for Action for Children, said: "With 75% of adults who have lifelong mental health issues first experiencing symptoms by the age of 18, it is essential that we act early to prevent these illnesses from having a devastating impact on the rest of their lives.

"I am thrilled that Action for Children has been chosen as FirstGroup's new charity partner. Our partnership will enable us to provide expert mental health support directly to the children and young people we help. Throughout the next three years, FirstGroup will be a key partner in helping us to achieve our ambition that any child who needs help gets help."

The advertising space donated by FirstGroup is one element of its partnership with Action for Children, through which the company will provide £1m of support in the form of cash, fundraising and the commercial value of gifts in kind.

The partnership with FirstGroup will also fund direct mental health support for some of these children and their families, meaning that issues can be tackled as early as possible, reducing the impact on future lives.



Vinita Nawathe Chair of TravelWatch SouthWest

For TravelWatch SouthWest, a joined-up railway should be the backbone of an integrated transport system and a vital enabler of inclusive economic growth. We have consistently pushed for a collaborative approach - between track and train operators; between rail and bus; between the rail industry and national and local government; and between all the above and the communities, businesses and individuals (the actual and potential passengers) their transport services serve. TravelWatch South West holds consultation events and workshops alongside its two general meetings a year bringing together its membership with representatives of the transport industry, local and central government, so that we can share issues, ideas and best practice to help us individually and collectively push for continuous improvement of our transport system.

In July 2017, pre-empting that both Cross Country and GWR were coming towards the end of their franchise periods, TravelWatch SouthWest held a stakeholder consultation event to consider the opportunity this provided to look at the region's rail services holistically. The report, informed by the event and comments on a consultation draft, was launched at our Autumn General Meeting and submitted to DfT in October 2017. In "Connecting the Dots" TravelWatch SouthWest outlined how a joined-up approach to rail in the South West could better take account of, and should be expected to support, plans and aspirations for economic and spatial growth in the region, while providing part of a cleaner air solution to congestion – particularly where there is electrification.

"The Future of the Great Western Franchise" drew representatives of user groups, Local Authorities and LEPs from all corners of the TravelWatch SouthWest region to Devon County Council's chambers in January 2018. This lively TWSW event informed our response to the Department for Transport's consultation of the future shape and delivery of the Great Western service. Participants expressed concerns about: a potential split of the franchise losing current economies of scale; the potential consequences of a two-tiered railway with an electrified franchise and "the rest" and; how overcrowding on routes outside London can be addressed through franchising. While welcoming the direct award to GWR at this time, event participants stressed the need to ensure that this and any potential future Direct Award saw continued improvements across the franchise area.

GWR has a good track record of listening to stakeholders through attendance and hosting of stakeholder events and support for community rail. Added to its ongoing dialogue with local partners through relationship managers and accessible senior management, this provides a model for community engagement and manages to embrace the diversity of the region's aspirations and organisations. With the launch of *In Partnership for Britain's Prosperity – The West of England* in March this year, TravelWatch SouthWest applauds GWR's commitment to work with other rail operators and Network Rail to secure benefits for the economy, communities and passengers' journeys.

7.8 Sustainability

ISO 14001 and ISO 50001

Great Western Railway continues to build on the prestigious international standards for environmental and energy management by maintaining certification to ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 50001:2011. ISO 14001 and 50001 the world's most recognised environment and energy standards. The standards require organisations to demonstrate that environmental issues are closely integrated in their strategic direction. GWR are driving improvements in waste, water, and energy consumption in order to improve environmental performance.

Energy Consumption

Through the installation of the Shield Building Management System, GWR has been able to drive down electricity consumption at its stations. The Shield BMS system has been installed at all GWR operated stations and allows remote control and analysis of all energy systems. By taking control of the energy system away from the stations, the building's optimum energy performance can be realised. Safety or security critical issues can immediately be flagged up and relevant maintenance teams dispatched to resolve the issue. This will enable GWR to continue to put the safety and wellbeing of colleagues and passengers at the forefront of our operations.

Currently, the system has been focused on realising savings in energy consumption from lighting. As a result, savings of up to 15% in energy consumption have been achieved. Further savings will be seen across the franchise, as the Shield system is developed to enable remote control of heating systems.

Water Consumption

Through the installation of automated water meters, GWR has been able to significantly reduce water consumption across its portfolio. The meters provide daily feeds which enables changes in consumption to be easily detected. As a result, GWR has been able to identify leaks quickly and minimise any water wasted as a result. A 5% reduction in consumption at Stations has been realised across the year. As a result of improved data accuracy, GWR is now setting a target for water consumption for the 2018/19 financial year. The target will help drive continued environmental improvement across the business.

Recycling

GWR continues to strive to achieve a 75% recycling rate across the business. Alongside the recycling facilities available at stations, GWR is working with Simply Cups to recycle coffee cups. A successful trial at St Phillips Marsh has resulted in significant amounts of coffee cups being diverted from landfill. The coffee cups are recycled into other products such as low grade plastics and stationary. Further investigations are ongoing to identify whether a bio-degradable coffee cup can be introduced on board our trains.

GWR is also working with its station tenants to investigate how further recycling initiatives can be introduced. These include the provision of water refill points to encourage reuse of plastic bottles, and the recycling of food waste within food outlets at our stations.

Carbon Emission from Train Travel

To promote the environmental benefits of train travel, GWR has introduced a Carbon Calculator as part of the online ticket booking process. The calculator allows customers to compare how the carbon emissions of their journey would vary when using different modes of transport. Per passenger, the carbon emissions of train travel are much less than the same journey being undertaken in a petrol or diesel car.

Community Apprentice

For the third year, Great Western Railway has continued to support more than twenty young people from Colston's Girls' School to tackle social issues, as part of a Community Apprentice scheme run by education charity Envision. The Community Apprentice is an inter-school competition run in Bristol. Loosely based on the TV Series 'The Apprentice', two teams of young people compete to demonstrate leadership qualities whilst managing their own projects, aiming to have the biggest positive impact on their community.

Employees from GWR have mentored young people on the programme, supporting their projects and aiding their development. As well as providing references for the students to use in applications to university or employment. GWR were also able to support the previous years winners, by providing spaces for posters to be displayed as part of their campaign to reduce litter in Bristol.



8. Driving Business Growth



8.1 Partnership for Britain's Prosperity

The companies running the railway in the West of England have come together today to set out their long-term plan for the region's railway, which will secure £9.45bn of additional economic benefits for communities along the Great Western main line.

The full plan, called In Partnership for Britain's Prosperity – The West of England available on the Rail Delivery website raildelivery.com in the Publications section and sets out how £2.4bn invested in operating, maintaining and renewing the railway is enabling new and improved services. This is in addition to existing upgrades to electrify the Great Western main line and around £500m of private investment in a brand-new fleet of intercity trains to increase the frequency, quality and speed of journeys.

James Durie, Chief Executive, Chambers of Commerce & Initiative at Business West:

“For the local and regional economy to thrive we need better connectivity, better, more reliable trains and better, more reliable infrastructure. It is critical that passenger and freight rail services work collaboratively with Network Rail on our local and national routes. It is great to see them coming together to launch a plan that seeks to strengthen the economy and to boost communities.”

Thelma Sorensen OBE, Chairman, Cornwall Business Council, said:

“The four commitments in this single plan recognise the vital importance of the railway to our local economy in the far South West in terms of reducing journey times, which are essential to the business community, driving growth and improving connectivity to key economic hubs. It builds on the investments that have already been made and the fact that it has been signed up to by all parts of the railway is to be very much welcomed.”

Paul Britton, Chief Executive, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, said:

“Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce members have identified in the Business Manifesto that transport infrastructure is critical to the continued attractiveness of the Thames Valley as a place to locate, run and grow a business. It is more important than ever for all key stakeholders in the region to work together to deliver improvements to the capacity and quality of rail travel as well as potential new routes and stations to ensure the railway can play a key part in supporting business in the Thames Valley.”



Image left to right: Keith Walton, Severnside Community Rail Partnership, Andy Cooper Managing Director CrossCountry; Joe Graham, GWR Business Assurance Director; Mike Gallop, NR Director of Route Safety and Asset Management and James Durie Chief Executive, Chambers of Commerce & Initiative at Business West.

8.2 East

Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership are strong advocates of rail enhancement and continue to champion the case for Western Rail Link to Heathrow as their principle infrastructure priority. Through the Local Growth Fund the LEP are investing in a range of enhancement projects across the Thames Valley being delivered by GWR and our partners:

Newbury – West Berkshire Council

£6.5M has been allocated from the Local Growth Fund and the DfT's CycleRail fund to deliver a new southern bus rail interchange, new business start-up units, new cycle hubs and improved passenger facilities. The project complements the planned Market Street development to the north of the station which will deliver a new Multi-Storey Car Park, northern forecourt and improved connectivity to the town centre, as well as the installation by Network Rail of a fully accessible footbridge with lifts that is close to completion. Together the projects will transform Newbury Station and provide a fully fit for purpose facility to cater for the additional demand that electric services are expected to generate.

Maidenhead – Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

The project involves a redevelopment of the station forecourt and improved connectivity between the station and the town centre. This will create a public space at the front of the station to provide a much improved sense of arrival, enhanced cycle parking and improved walking and cycling links to the town centre.

Reading Green Park – Reading Borough Council

GWR is working with Reading Borough Council to deliver a new station at Reading Green Park. A total of £15.75M has been secured from the Local Growth Fund, developer funding and the New Stations Fund to create a high quality transport interchange with full passenger facilities to serve the business park, new residential developments and the Madejski Stadium and conference centre. Detailed design work is being undertaken and the station is on programme to open in May 2019.

Hanborough Station Building

During 2017 GWR successfully bid to the Network Rail Crossrail team for a Modular Station building formerly in use at Abbey Wood Station to be installed at Hanborough on the

North Cotswolds Line. Working with local partners including West Oxfordshire District Council and the Cotswolds Line Promotion Group, detailed design work is ongoing towards bringing the building into operation in December 2018.

North Cotswold Line Task Force

Following the successful launch of the North Cotswold Line Task Force (NCLTF) in June 2017, the group has been working to develop a strategic outline business case. GWR continues to support the Task Force which is close to defining an agreed aspiration service pattern to provide 2 trains per hour between Worcester and Paddington. Over the coming months the Taskforce will define infrastructure requirements and a phased approach to delivery, before seeking funding to undertake detailed design work.

Multi-storey car park at Didcot Parkway

Work is well underway to build a new 1,800 capacity multi-storey car park at Didcot Parkway railway station. GWR is delivering the £23 million project, part-funded by the Local Growth Fund, supported by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). This is an additional 900 spaces at the Foxhall Road site, to cater for extra demand our new Intercity Express Trains will create to support growth across Science Vale in the south of Oxfordshire. In addition, Network Rail is constructing a new footbridge at the west end of the station. When completed, the footbridge will provide customers with a direct, covered walkway route from Foxhall Road car park to the station. The car park is due to open at the end of summer 2018.



8.3 Wales

Major Events

GWR also continues to play an important role in helping transport the many hundreds of thousands of fans attending events at the Principality Stadium near Cardiff Central. Since last year's successful UEFA Champions League Final, with ATW we have served nearly ten more major events attended by over half a million spectators and there is more to come in 2018 with a further 12, at the moment, major events planned before the end of the year.

My Trains Wales awarded CCIF grant

This year saw the second tranche of Customer & Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) monies awarded to the My Train Wales project across South Wales. This project built on the success of the first year to provide safety and training videos for young people, teenagers, and elderly people to educate on how to use the railway. The project was met with positive

feedback from stakeholders, after presenting at GWR's Stakeholder Conference in Barnstaple, and has made a real difference to communities across South Wales. The project has since been awarded further funding from CCIF - making it the only project to receive funding in each year of the three-year programme - showing testament to its success.

Castles come into service

The first of GWR's new Castle Class trains is now in passenger operation. The trains will operate on longer distance local routes including Cardiff to Bristol, Taunton and Penzance and Exeter to Penzance.

A modified High Speed Train with wifi, at seat sockets, automatic doors, toilet retention tanks and interior refresh, they will run with four carriages replacing older trains on the route; giving more seats and a more comfortable journey.



8.4 Central

Plans for Cheltenham Spa take shape

GWR is working with Gloucestershire County Council, Cheltenham Borough Council, GFirst LEP, Network Rail and the Department for Transport to bring forward a long term masterplan for the station. The key immediate issues at the station are the lack of station car parking to accommodate demand at peak times and a poor quality environment and interchange within the station forecourt.

A public consultation on Phase 1 of the proposals, to provide an enhanced car park and improved forecourt, was held last Autumn and received overwhelming support.

Funding of £1.497m towards the car park and forecourt works has been allocated from the G First LEP and a further £701k is already allocated from the DfT's Station Commercial Project Facility (SCPF) programme. GWR and DfT have agreed further match funding of £800k.

The preferred option will achieve 78 additional spaces in a surface level car park and improve the forecourt area. The design also aims to make it easier to connect by bus or taxi and safer and more convenient to walk or cycle. GWR is working with Network Rail to consider the details of the scheme with a view to starting Phase 1 on site later in 2018, for completion by Spring 2019.

Parking at Gloucester Station doubles as first part of station revamp

A new car park at Gloucester's railway station opened in March 2018, doubling the number of spaces as part of a phased project to modernise the station. Over 200 additional spaces are now available at a new, separate car park accessed from Great Western Way, with even more to be added during the £2.7 million works. On completion of the project there will be 243 spaces in total.

The works will also see a new northern entrance into the station; secure gate lines; improved access; a new ticket vending machine, CCTV, and designated cycle storage. But this isn't the end of the story. GWR and Gloucester City Council were delighted to secure £3.75m from the GFirst LEP for further improvements at the station. The extra funding will enable improvements to the underpass which link the areas north and south of the station, as well as forecourt improvements, improvements to the station building façade and a new access from the southern car park onto Metz

Way. GWR is also providing input to the City Council's plans for improving the Kings Quarter area of the City. The Kings Quarter plans aim to transform the links between the station and the City Centre as part of a major urban regeneration. The future looks bright for Gloucester!

Kemble receives Royal Approval

Parking at Kemble Station has recently doubled, following the completion of work on a new car park officially opened by HRH The Princess Royal. Completion of the £1.4 million works provided an extra 333 spaces at a new, separate car park. Princess Anne was on hand to open the car park of her local station, which has seen rapid growth in customer numbers in recent years.



Gloucester, Cheltenham and Kemble will all see the introduction of Intercity Express Trains from summer 2018. The additional seating capacity of the train, an extra 26% more than an HST, combined with a new timetable introduced from January 2019 timetable, will be a significant game changer for services to and from London.

Chippenham Station's long term plan off to a great start

GWR is working with Wiltshire Council and the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP to bring forward a long term improvement plan for the station and local environments. The first phase of the project, completed earlier this year with funding from the DfT and the LEP, was the installation of a gateline and associated remodelling of the booking hall and café. The improvements were undertaken sensitively to enhance the appearance of the station, which is a listed building. Local Enterprise Partnership funding is also contributing towards bringing forward improvements to the forecourt to improve integration and providing a northern lift on the footbridge. The latter will improve accessibility to platforms for customers parking on the northern side of the station, as well as benefit connections between the north and south of the railway.

The long term aim is to assist the development and regeneration of the areas around the station, with plans for housing and commercial development coming forward. A multi-storey car park is also proposed for the station.



8.5 West

Taunton

Design work is moving into the next stage of detail. Attention is turning to choices of materials, finishes and how the improved station and car park design will integrate with the surrounding redevelopment projects. GWR is working in partnership with Taunton Deane Borough Council, Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, and Somerset County Council to get the balance right between design impact, improved passenger facilities and good value whilst respecting the heritage of the station. Preparations are underway for the Design & Build tender which we expect to award later this year with construction set to be complete early 2020. A successful bid by GWR to the Department for Transport Cycle Rail Fund has also enhanced the scope to include a significant increase in cycle facilities, including extra covered parking.

Exeter St Davids ticket gate and concourse capacity improvements

Construction will begin this year on a project to improve capacity through the station concourse. This will involve creating new entrance ways between concourse, forecourt and platform and a near doubling of the ticket gateline to ensure quicker and easier access. In addition to this scheme we also working in partnership with Exeter College and Local Authorities to develop plans to improve access to the station. In the longer term, GWR is contributing to plans for the significant redevelopment of the station area to improve the range of facilities for rail customers and provide a helping hand in the development of this part of the city.



Exmouth Station Enhancements

Through the National Station Improvement Programme (NSIP) we're concluding the final pieces of the jigsaw that has seen Exmouth stations setting transformed over recent years. GWR has worked closely with the Exmouth Transport Partnership stakeholders to inform and develop

the improvements. The enhanced station entrance includes a new illuminated access ramp and steps, and an improved booking hall which now provides access at all times making it easier, quicker and more convenient to use the station. Finishing touches are underway including additional planting designed and provided in partnership with Exmouth in Bloom. Our work with the Exmouth Transport Partnership, including Local Authorities, Community Groups and other transport providers, means we share an ongoing ambition to improve and serve the communities along the Avocet Line - a diverse market from city to seaside.

Newton Abbot Ticket Gates

Tackling ticketless travel is an ambition we share with many of our stakeholders. At Newton Abbot we've opened a brand new ticket gateline providing extra security, staff presence and reassurance to our customers. Reducing the impact of ticketless travel means that we can protect vital revenue, ensures fairness for all customers, and helps provide us with a robust basis for ongoing investment in our railway.



Long Rock Depot

Our Depot at Long Rock in Penzance has completed an extensive £23 million overhaul. Funded by Cornwall Council and Network Rail, it has transformed the old single road High Speed Train shed into a three road shed capable of handling the new rolling stock the depot will have to maintain, including the Class 57 Night Riviera Sleeper stock, which has moved homes from Old Oak Common to Penzance. The project, which was completed in December 2017, recycled and refurbished the old shed on site and morphed the new extension into a single building that looks and feels brand new. The investment from GWR's partners at Cornwall Council through the Cornwall Local Enterprise Partnership and Network Rail renewals funding has expanded the skilled jobs on this site for GWR and the wider community.

Sleeper Refurb:

Cornwall Council have funded the refurbishment of the carriages on the Night Riviera service between Penzance and London Paddington. 12 of the 20 carriages on the Night Riviera have been refurbished and are already in service carrying passengers 6 nights a week between the Westcountry and the Capital.

Sleeper Lounges:

This summer, GWR will be opening two dedicated Sleeper Lounges in Truro and Penzance for the Night Riviera Sleeper customers to use before boarding at night and after alighting in the morning, providing customers with all the facilities you would expect from a travelling hotel. Complete with individual toilet and shower rooms, hotel style lounge and small kitchenette, they will offer both the business and leisure traveller alike a space to refresh and relax within the station building, whilst waiting for the train. Paddington First Class Lounge is also having an extension to accommodate showers as part of the project and all three stations will have a dedicated Customer Host to assist customers and manage the facilities when open.

Truro Car Park:

As part of the Sleeper Lounge project, Truro Car Park has been fully refurbished and slightly expanded to provide a modern station car park for users. Historical drainage problems have been rectified and hardstanding provided throughout the car park.

Wi-Fi:

Thanks to Cornwall Council, by the summer of 2018, the County of Cornwall will have free Wi-Fi available at nearly every station for customers to take advantage of whilst waiting for the train. Apart from Coombe Junction Halt on the Looe Line, which we were unable to deliver due to its remote location, surfing the web in some of the most rural areas on GWR's network will now be easy and reliable. Many of the 35 stations are already providing live Wi-Fi and the final few stations will come on line shortly. Across the border in Devon, Wi-Fi is also expanding outside the major stations and thanks to investment from the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership and Devon County, with additional finance from GWR, Digby & Sowton, Polsloe Bridge and Crediton will also soon offer customers the same free Wi-Fi that is now becoming the standard in the region.

Exeter Depot

March saw the start of construction work to deliver a new £40 million train maintenance depot at Exeter.

In partnership with Network Rail and the Department for Transport, we are expanding our existing Exeter Olds View Depot train maintenance facility in Exeter to accommodate an increase in its fleet size in the Devon and Cornwall area which will lead to more seats, and more frequent services. The new depot is situated alongside existing facilities next to Exeter St. Davids station and will provide enhanced modern servicing, cleaning and maintenance facilities necessary to support these trains. The plans include office and welfare facilities for staff and the depot is designed to provide improved facilities for train maintenance.



Work is due to complete in summer 2019.

Potential for more; HOCHTIEF (UK) has been appointed to carry out the works. Managing Director, Lawrence Jackson said:

“HOCHTIEF (UK) is a major supplier of rail infrastructure in the Western Region and is delighted to be supporting GWR in delivering the new depot at Exeter Olds View. Our business will work in collaboration with the project team to provide an essential part of rail fleet improvements.

“The project will provide local employment and training through apprenticeships to provide a legacy from the construction work and the project team will liaise with local schools and colleges to inspire the next generation of construction workers.”



Tim Smith MBE Chief Executive of Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

When your economy generates over £37bn of GVA each year, the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) interventions to enhance local economic growth are not immediately obvious. That's why evidence is so crucial to ensure that public funds are targeted appropriately. In Thames Valley Berkshire our investment programme to 2021 has concentrated on infrastructure.

Why? Because the transport (and communications) infrastructure on which we rely - in an area enjoying unrivalled locational advantages - is simultaneously a local, national and international resource. It is very congested. This threatens to undermine our intrinsic growth potential and makes it essential to invest in and encourage sustainable transport networks. This is the essence of our vision: that our infrastructure must match the scale of our ambition and potential.

While a significant proportion of our Local Growth Funds (LGF) and Growing Places Funds has contributed to regeneration and unlocking housing sites, over £25m is being invested in rail schemes. The most exciting is a new station at Green Park on the Reading to Basingstoke line. This was the subject of a visit by the Secretary of State for Transport toward the end of March 2018 and is a critical piece of infrastructure for several reasons: it will connect a 60-acre housing site; it will support the development of a new international convention centre; and it will enhance intra-urban connectivity, in particular for a 195-acre business park that is home to many of the international brands headquartered in Thames Valley Berkshire.

My LEP is investing £9.15m of LGF in the construction of this new station, which is due to open in summer 2019. We are also investing heavily in Crossrail by preparing three of our stations for the opening of the new Elizabeth Line in 2019: Maidenhead, Langley and Burnham stations will receive a total investment of £7.25m LGF.

In the west of our area we are making an equally significant investment alongside GWR and Network Rail, in improvements to Newbury station worth over £6m of LGF. And, in the centre of our patch, a new Parkway is being created at Winnersh Triangle, adjacent to a burgeoning business park. Here, the LEP investment is £3m LGF.

Where schemes are beyond the scope of local interventions we continue to press central government and use all the levers available to realise improvements that are of significant economic benefit. None is more important to us than a Western Rail Link to Heathrow and it is encouraging that the government has now issued a 'call for ideas' for private finance solutions to a *Southern* Rail Link.

At Thames Valley Berkshire LEP we recognise the importance of rail and associated infrastructure in economic growth. As we continue to develop a Local Industrial Strategy that will not diminish; we will continue to work with our rail partners to develop solutions to the challenges of connectivity. In this regard, the Thames Valley is well-placed to come up with innovative technological interventions, to complement the very welcome investment in hard infrastructure that our area is enjoying.

8.6 GWR agrees sponsorship deal with Visit Bath

With GWR providing over 60 services a day between London and Bath Spa, offering over 30,000 seats, as well as direct services from South Wales, the South Coast, and the South Cotswolds, a one-year partnership agreement has been signed with Visit Bath.

Leslie Redwood, Head of Business Development and Partnerships at Visit Bath said:

“We are delighted with this major strategic marketing partnership with GWR, especially at this most crucial time of the biggest upgrading of the railway in a generation.

“Visit Bath is also a rapidly changing and expanding organisation with much more of a national and international remit than ever before, supporting both the City and Region of Bath with Marketing Campaigns, Events and many new Partnership arrangements, across many sectors, widening the organisation’s support and promotional agenda.

“This arrangement is one of the biggest strategic partnerships ever agreed outside of London and is already yielding huge benefits to both partners involved – we look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with our new lead travel partners.”

Bath has over 5 million visitors every year, 4.6 million of which are day trippers, making it the most visited city outside of London. During the 2016 Bath Christmas Market, over a quarter of visitors to the city travelled by train with the number increasing year on year.



Left to right: Visit bath's Lesley Redwood, GWR's Rachel Jefferies and Visit Bath Chief Executive David James.

8.7 Crossrail Update

Great Western Railway is proactively working with MTR Crossrail who will deliver train services on the Elizabeth line of behalf of Transport for London.

In December 11 GWR Thames Valley stations transferred to MTR Cross rail. This included the transfer of GWR colleagues working at these stations. The first MTR Crossrail services started operation between Paddington Station and Heathrow Station in May 2018, with the Elizabeth line fully operational in December 2019, running from Reading and Heathrow in the west through to central London and Abbey Wood in the East.







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