



Great
Western
Railway



Great
Western
Route

Integrated Transport Strategy



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Joanna Grew,
GWR and Network Rail Western
Joint Route Strategy Director

Rail travel helps connect people across the country. Whether travelling for business, leisure or catching up with family, the industry helps millions of people each year get to where they need to be. We recognise that rail is often one part of the end-to-end journey our passengers make.

Journeys naturally don’t start and end at the railway station. The ‘first and last mile’, or how passengers access the rail network, is a key part of the overall journey. Ensuring easy and reliable access to our railway stations is vital if the railway is to grow and serve the communities that rely on it.

This strategy outlines how we work with our partners and key stakeholders to improve journeys for passengers. It details how we will collaborate with local authorities and other transport providers to maximise opportunities. It outlines our individual modal strategies, identifying how each element supports greater connectivity to the rail network. Case studies of best practice are shared, demonstrating how we deliver projects.

We are proud to lead this work and grateful to the many partners who work with us tirelessly towards this shared purpose. However, we are making a difference and, as the railway evolves, we will ensure Integrated Transport remains a fundamental pillar of our approach.

We aim to inspire others and to invite more organisations to work with the railway. By working together and leveraging funding opportunities, we can increase mobility, encourage more sustainable transport choices and unlock wider economic benefits across our region.

There is a significant opportunity ahead of us. By continuing to work closely together, we can build on the strong progress already being made. This strategy sets out how we intend to turn that ambition into action, and we hope others across the network will join us in helping to realise it.



Introduction

We recognise that the train is just one part of the journey our customers undertake. Integrated Transport enables passengers to make seamless door-to-door journeys, and our role is essential in enhancing the customer experience and supporting modal choice.

To do this in an inclusive way, we recognise the importance of promoting travel to stations by bus, cycling, walking and other 'new mobility' options, as well as by car (including drop-off/pick-up) and taxi. By improving the journey experience through information, ticketing and better physical connections, we aim to achieve objectives in four key areas:

- Sustainability
- Accessibility
- Customer experience
- Business development

This strategy focuses on how we will deliver these objectives, detailing our approach across individual modal strategies (e.g. bus, cycle, walk, etc.).

It also sets out how we prioritise interventions and activities by mode, to deliver the greatest impact for our customers. Attention is also given to areas where Integrated Transport can be embedded within existing GWR initiatives to maximise benefits.

What is Integrated Transport

Integrated Transport is the means by which customers can use rail services as part of an overall door-to-door journey. To do so effectively and efficiently, customers need:

- Information (at all stages of the customer journey, including before they set off for the station and during the journey on the train, so they know what to expect on arrival at their destination station)
- Wayfinding
- Availability of tickets (including integrated and smart tickets)
- Means of ticket purchase
- Service linkages
- Physical linkages
- Station facilities
- Convenient timetabling

An important principle is that customers can seamlessly access the rail element of the journey.



Why Integrated Transport is important

Integrating transport networks is one of the Government's top five transport priorities. Its publication, 'Better Connected,' presents a strategy for Integrated Transport and highlights the crucial role of rail in creating seamless journeys. GWR is committed to working with other operators (including bus and rail operators, as well as providers of shared transport), local transport authorities and the wider community to identify and deliver Integrated Transport improvements across our network. Our network covers a large geographical area and includes a mixture of urban and rural communities.

In seeking to join up transport, we work to ensure that communities have a choice in how they access the rail network. We recognise the benefits as:

- **Improving connectivity and accessibility**
Encouraging and enabling people to travel
- **Increasing low and zero carbon options**
Supporting local sustainability aims
- **Addressing rural mobility issues**
Connecting people and opportunities
- **Enhancing overall journey experience**
Winning hearts and minds

GWR's approach to Integrated Transport is part of our joined-up agenda of working with communities and stakeholders to extend our reach and make a positive contribution to accessibility, diversity and inclusion, so that rail services can benefit all.

The customer perspective

As customers make more informed decisions about how they travel, and as the rail network seeks to encourage greater use of interconnected and sustainable transport modes, it is vital that we listen carefully to customer experience and behaviour. This enables us to not only maintain standards, but also understand where targeted improvements can support greater use of public transport and non car access to stations.

By combining insight from our Voice of the Customer (VoC) programme with the Rail Customer Experience Survey (RCXS), we are able to assess customer experience across key stages of the end to end journey. This includes how customers arrive at the station, how well stations connect with onward modes, and how these experiences influence longer term travel choices. Importantly, this approach allows us to measure both immediate satisfaction and more gradual behavioural change, such as the adoption of alternative access modes in place of the private car, or increased use of planning tools and public transport connections.

Using this combined evidence base, a set of experiential and behavioural metrics can be observed. Measures sourced from RCXS are industry standard and allow for broader comparison across the rail sector.

Experiential measures

- Ease of using bus or coach to access the station
- Quality of departure station connections with public transport
- Availability of car parking
- Availability of cycle parking
- Connections with other train services

These measures reflect customers’ perceptions of ease, availability and integration at the point of travel.

Behavioural measures

Percentage of customers using public transport to:

- Access the station
- Complete their onward journey
- Access the station (RCXS)

Experiential	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	3 yr variance
Ease of using bus/coach to get to the station	86	86	88	2
Departure station connections with public transport	70	72	81	11
Availability of car parking	70	68	71	1
Availability of bicycle parking	71	71	75	4
Connections with other train services	77	78	80	3

Behavioural	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	3 yr variance
% using bus/coach to access the station	10	10	8	-2
% using bus/coach to complete their journey	10	10	9	-1
% using public transport to access the station (RCXS)			14*	n/a

* Railway Reporting Period 2507 to 2511

The figures in the table opposite show changes in actual travel choices for Rail years 2023-4 and 2025-6. Given they measure real life behaviour, the tendency is to observe slow change over time.

Experiential measures are presented as the proportion of passengers reporting satisfaction, while behavioural measures show the proportion of customers using each access mode. The variance across the period provides an indication of where improvements in experience may be translating into changes in behaviour, and where further intervention is required.



Our vision for Integrated Transport

“To encourage growth in passenger footfall by facilitating seamless end to end sustainable travel by all transport modes.”

This ambition aligns with the wider industry context. The Rail Delivery Group’s ‘Vision for Stations’ sets out the principle of a seamless journey experience in which stations are fully integrated with rail services and onward travel modes, including walking, cycling, bus, car and other public transport connections.

The results across this period indicate that a sustained and strategic programme of work is improving key elements of the customer experience at stations. However, while experiential measures show positive movement, behavioural change remains more incremental. This is expected: changes in travel behaviour typically lag improvements in infrastructure and information, and are influenced by wider local transport networks and customer habits developed over time.

Maintaining momentum therefore requires continued focus on customer experience alongside investment in well integrated, reliable and legible transport options. Over time, consistent improvements in perceived ease and connectivity are a critical foundation for achieving stronger and more enduring shifts towards public transport and other sustainable access modes.

Vision and objectives

Our vision for Integrated Transport is linked with our overriding objectives, which are to improve train service performance and reduce the subsidy requirement of the railway.

We will do this by:

- Improving the ease with which customers can access services, including travel to and from the station, and arrangements at the station itself
- Partnerships which improve our ability to reach new customers and communities, and secure this growth in an inclusive way by promoting sustainable, cost-effective and efficient travel

We will help customers navigate the rail network seamlessly, thereby maximising opportunities for the rail network.

GWR already has good links within the wider transport industry, including other public transport operators such as bus companies and transport authorities.

To work more effectively with our stakeholders, we regularly review our approach to modal strategies and measures to improve customer experience, increase accessibility, promote sustainability and support growth.

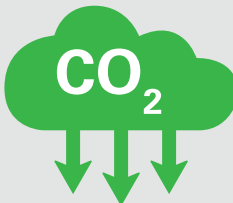
Approach

GWR and Network Rail are working closely together to respond to stakeholder issues and support improvements at stations. GWR’s Transport Integration Manager provides a strategic point for the industry in coordinating activities associated with integration. The Transport Integration Manager leads on strategy, meanwhile developing and delivering a portfolio of projects to improve integration. We leverage our Transport Integration budget to prioritise schemes where we know enhanced facilities will create a seamless approach to multi-modal journeys. The Transport Integration Manager leads an industry working group for the GWR region aimed at aligning strategy with delivery and supporting wider industry teams with best practice guidance.

Our integrated Transport portfolio is supported by a team of Regional Development Managers (RDMs) and Industry Programme Directors (IPDs). They work closely with local authorities, leveraging support and funding for our Integrated Transport aims.



Our specific objectives for Integrated Transport are:

Growing the customer base  Facilitate the growth of our passenger footfall while encouraging customers to access our network by sustainable travel modes	Using what's already out there  Capitalise on existing connections between transport modes including other rail services, bus, cycling, walking and car	The shift to leisure journeys  Open up new markets, with a particular focus on destination-led leisure markets
Improving the experience  Enhance interchange facilities to improve customer experience, improve accessibility and contribute to improving NRPS scores	Reducing overall carbon emissions  Maximise opportunities for sustainable travel including other public transport modes, walking, cycling and move to carbon-neutral private transport	

Customer experience

Working cross-functionally and through our Integrated Transport Working Group, we focus on delivering actions to enhance the customer proposition and experience.

We use our website (GWR.com) to disseminate accurate supporting information about connections and onward travel. Alongside National Rail Enquiries, which enables us to showcase our dedication to onward travel links from the railway, including our key Rail Link and multi-operator ticket schemes in operation across the network. This is supplemented by dedicated onward travel information posters at stations and, at key locations, enhanced bus interchange information posters.

Enhanced wayfinding (including bus stop labelling and directional signage) is in place at many stations to support ease of interchange between bus and rail, and we continue to expand this across the GWR network to improve consistency.

We work in collaboration with other rail operators to ensure joint promotion of Integrated Transport schemes, including our neighbours South Western Railway and Transport for Wales. We recognise that the GWR network forms part of the wider railway network. We share best practice across operating routes, while also aiming to learn from lived experience and examples across the wider industry.

Internally, the GWR property team works closely with the Transport Integration Manager to ensure that cycle parking and waiting shelters provided on station forecourts are suitable for passenger interchange between modes (bus and cycling). We also work closely with local authorities to review provision and discuss how facilities can be enhanced to improve the customer experience, regardless of owner.

The following infographic sets out our approach to improving the customer experience across journey touchpoints.



Individual modal strategies



Walking and cycling

Walking and cycling to the station will always be a key method of access to the rail network. Physical improvements to the local transport network, alongside growing policies to prioritise walking and cycling, will ensure a continued focus on active methods of accessing stations.

While many walking and cycling journeys are carried out in the urban environment, rural stations can pose their own challenges. We work with local authorities to consider connections to local walking and cycling routes in both urban and rural environments, particularly where opportunities for quick wins may arise through wayfinding enhancements.

For cyclists, we prioritise cycle parking at the station, as cycle facilities on board trains are limited by the capacity and design of train fleets. Ensuring suitable and accessible storage facilities that cyclists are happy to use helps promote active travel and encourage modal shift. We operate a range of cycle parking at stations, from standard cycle hoops at smaller stations to large, covered cycle hubs at key locations. We also support local authorities in operating cycle lockers at selected stations.

The provision of cycle hire facilities also has a role to play, alongside the emergence of shared mobility hire schemes. We will work with local authorities, in collaboration with our property team, to support and facilitate cycle hire and ensure a consistent approach.

Where there is an opportunity to improve station facilities, forecourts and/or car parks we will consider walking and cycling as an essential part of the scheme. Opportunities to create or improve dedicated walking and cycling routes to stations will be identified where there is a strong business case, or they can be delivered as part of a community project, especially where third-party funding is available.



Bus-rail links

Buses link stations to residential areas, places of employment, educational establishments, healthcare facilities, retail and leisure attractions. They enable passengers to make end-to-end journeys by public transport. Improved integration at rail stations can support a growth in demand and enhance these vital links.

We work closely with local authorities across our network to ensure seamless interchange between modes. Crucial to good bus-rail integration is having up-to-date and accurate live timetable information, connections with reasonable interchange times between the platform and bus stop, easy-to-use ticketing, and facilities such as good wayfinding signage to guide customers between the bus stop and their train. We work in partnership with local authorities to ensure bus information is provided at stations (including supporting real-time bus information screens) and undertake collaborative work to ensure bus infrastructure is appropriate for each station.

GWR also works directly with bus operators across the network to explore and promote seamless connections. This includes opportunities for service enhancements (such as improved bus-rail interchange times), joint ticketing initiatives and collaborative marketing opportunities.

Our exemplar work with bus operators includes opportunities where the bus network helps expand the reach and breadth of the rail network. Through partnership work involving the local authorities and bus operators we champion the Rail Link concept. This sees bus services that combine local authority funding, bus operator expertise and railway branding and marketing to package improved bus-rail connectivity. We operate nine Rail Link services where customers can plan and book through journeys to a range of towns and destinations beyond the rail network. We provide journey planning information for these bus services on rail industry systems, creating a true 'bus branch line' from selected



rail stations. This is supported by Rail Link branding on bus vehicles and associated joint marketing of these routes. Alongside the core Rail Link routes, several bus operators have utilised Rail Link branding to highlight other connecting bus services to railway stations, such as urban services. We continue to champion the use of this brand to help improve bus-rail connectivity from the railway.

While Rail Link focuses on enhancing regional connectivity, GWR also supports key bus connections at large cities and towns across the network. Local engagement with city and mayoral authorities is undertaken to help develop further opportunities for urban connections. Across these locations, we work closely with Traveline to promote PlusBus, enabling rail passengers to add a city or town bus ticket to their rail ticket.

Across rural areas, we also continue to support local authorities operating Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services. These services provide access to remote areas where traditional bus service coverage can be limited. Several DRT schemes now also operate under the Rail Link brand, especially where good connections with regional railway stations exist.



Micromobility and mobility hubs

A mobility hub is an allocated and well-designed space for sustainable transport options that aims to make choosing non-car options easy and convenient. Station forecourts already accommodate many elements of a mobility hub. We continue to support local authorities who are considering co-locating different forms of sustainable transport (e.g. Portway Park & Ride station) and prioritising these areas over the allocation of car parking spaces.

Where there is an opportunity to do so, we continue to consider co-location of bus interchanges, cycle parking, bike hire (including e-bikes) and car clubs on our station forecourts.

Car club schemes

Car club schemes are growing in popularity across the UK. They provide a viable alternative to car ownership. We review opportunities to use space in station car parks to support these schemes. Being based at stations, they also provide a benefit to people making leisure trips, encouraging travel by train ahead of the private car.

Sharing mobility hire (e-bike and e-scooter schemes)

Local authorities continue to expand shared micromobility transport options (such as e-bike and e-scooter schemes). GWR is working with local authorities and private e-bike providers to review opportunities for e-bike hire points. In particular where a local authority has already rolled out a defined network of e-bike hire across an urban area. Working in collaboration with our estates team we continue to review opportunities for bike hire bays at stations, enabling a new way of access to stations.

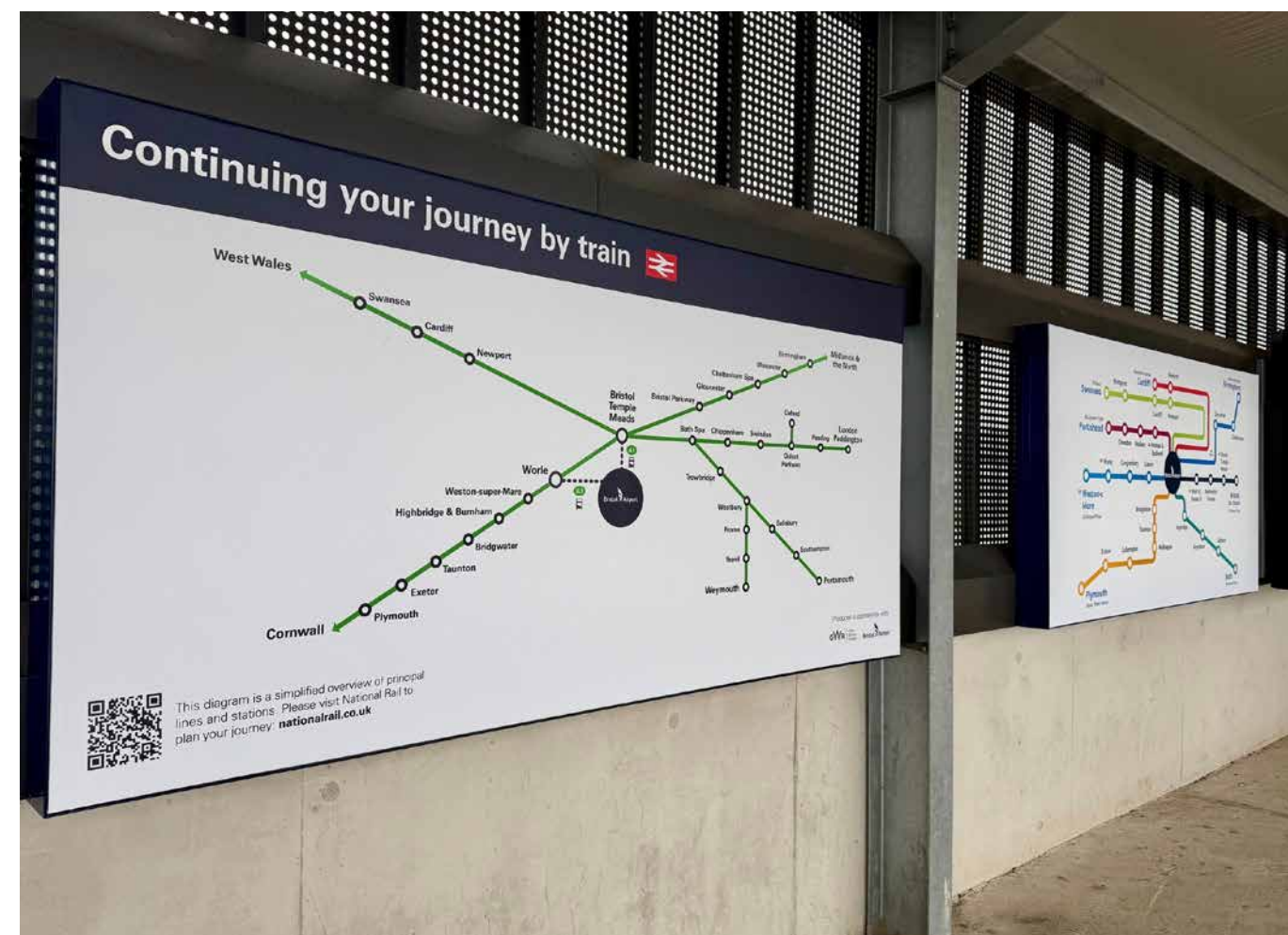
While e-scooter use (in defined schemes) is growing across the UK, current safety guidance set at national level does not permit e-scooters on railway land. We will continue to monitor and review guidance and respond and react accordingly as standards evolve.

Railway to runway

The rail network is strategically positioned to enable sustainable travel to airports. We work in partnership with airport operators to identify and maintain a network of key connections to airports. This includes airports not directly connected to the rail network, as well as those where key bus routes enhance connectivity to major airports.

We work in partnership with Bristol Airport to promote sustainable shared transport modes, including bus and rail, for access to the airport. As the UK's largest airport not served directly by a rail station, ensuring an integrated experience is vital to delivering seamless journeys for customers. We provide opportunities for through journeys to the airport, with integrated ticketing and journey information available. We jointly market these connections via social media campaigns and traditional marketing formats.

We also work with the two largest airports in the UK, Heathrow and London Gatwick. Both share similar challenges, with expansion plans based around an increase in public transport mode share to the airport. GWR is the only rail operator to offer a one-change rail link to Heathrow, while Gatwick can be directly accessed via the North Downs Line service from Reading. While rail links exist, we also work in partnership with the RailAir express coach service from Reading to Heathrow Airport. This is a long-standing route providing direct access to the airport without requiring travel via London. Enhanced interchange facilities exist at Reading station and, with through ticketing and journey information available, this service also complements our range of bus connections from the rail network.



Common themes

People

GWR has a long history of engaging with the communities it serves. We know that nurturing strong relationships creates the right atmosphere to develop successful projects and initiatives, often supporting local objectives through the delivery of joined-up door-to-door transport.

Engagement with Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) and Rail User Groups helps us understand the issues that are important to the communities we serve. Our Regional Development and Community

teams have regular meetings with the CRPs and attend joint steering groups as well as reviewing action plans. In addition, we attend Rail User Group meetings and host Local Transport Forums alongside Network Rail, bringing together local authorities, politicians, user groups and community organisations to review business updates and discuss issues that may arise. We also seek to understand user insights, which can come from customers, communities and colleagues, as well as tailored research.

Case Study Highbridge Town Council



GWR is working with Highbridge Town Council to improve wayfinding to and from the step-free entrance to platform 1. Working with the town council, we received input directly from the community, including a wide range of station users. By ensuring people are at the heart of our approach, we aim to deliver a scheme that benefits the needs of the community directly. To help enable the scheme, GWR has allocated funding via our accessibility and Integrated

Transport budgets. Our relationships with the local authority have also accelerated deliverability of the scheme, enabling a true partnership approach.

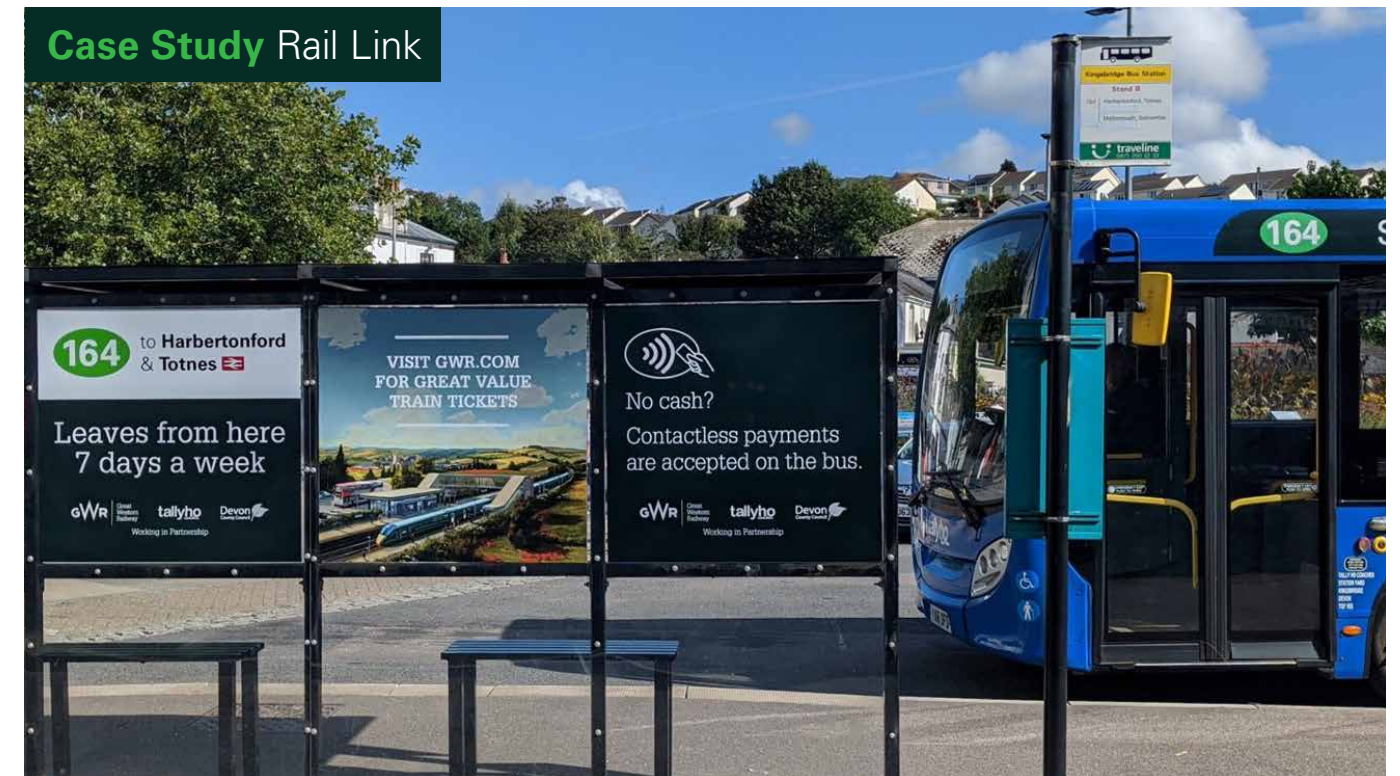
This scheme continues our ongoing relationship with Highbridge Town Council to drive enhanced access opportunities to the station. Previously, joint workstreams included improving interchange between rail and bus, including awareness of connections to Burnham-on-Sea, based on feedback from the community.

Partnerships

A rich seam of insight is available to GWR through its ongoing partnerships, working with organisations such as local authorities, transport bodies and other transport providers. They themselves have plans and aspirations for the transport network as a whole and it is important that due consideration is given

to these as part of GWR's own Integrated Transport strategy. Partnership working is also a means by which to unlock funding streams for specific schemes. Therefore, it is important that GWR's agenda aligns with its partners to ensure that such investment can be obtained.

Case Study Rail Link



The GWR network is enhanced by an extensive network of onward bus links. GWR has harnessed the benefits of these key connections by working in partnership with bus operators and local authorities to create Rail Link – a series of promoted bus routes from the rail network. This has been particularly successful across Devon, where good quality onward bus connections from key stations have been promoted via integrated ticketing, joint branding and clear information (including before the journey starts). Buses are planned to meet trains, allowing seamless connections to be made and helping the railway expand its reach. The success

of these schemes has led to increased patronage on rail and bus services, with both residents and visitors to the region utilising public transport to complete the first and last mile of the journey.

Research undertaken independently by Plymouth University in 2024 highlighted the success of the Devon Rail Link services, which have seen significant growth as a result of local authority investment and strong partnerships to help market them. We will continue to review their success and undertake further research to highlight customer insights, which could lead to further refinement.

Case Study Eden Project



GWR is uniquely positioned to bring together different organisations all with a common aim. The Eden Project is a major leisure destination on the GWR Network, accessed via bus from St Austell station. Ensuring visitors can access the destination sustainably via public transport is a key aim for both GWR and The Eden Project. GWR worked with the bus operator and local authority to promote and celebrate the bus connection from St Austell station. This included enhanced wayfinding both at the railway station and

The Eden Project, alongside a marketing campaign highlighting the simplicity of this connection. The Partnership approach has boosted patronage, accessing the destination by public transport, resulting in the local bus operator increasing bus provision during school holidays. By holding relationships across different sectors, GWR was uniquely positioned to lead the partnership and deliver key outputs required for the benefit of all partners.

Place

GWR works with local authorities and other transport providers to connect stations with local centres. We work in partnership to address issues both at the station and on local routes to and from it.

The layout and design of station forecourts and accesses have a large influence on the ease with which stations can be accessed by different transport users. Surveys and Station Travel Plans will help us develop and support our future vision for station forecourts and interchange facilities.

We continue to develop and focus on partnership working to upgrade bus shelter facilities at stations and improve bus-rail interchanges. GWR continues to work with local authorities to provide new shelters, following the required railway governance processes. These enhanced facilities showcase onward transport by bus as a priority.

Case Study Bedwyn station and Wiltshire Council



Through GWR's Customer and Community Investment Fund, Wiltshire Council received funding to deliver major improvements to active travel provision at Bedwyn station. Previously, onward travel facilities were displaced, restricting the benefits for the community. Their scheme enabled enhanced cycle parking

provision and a dedicated bus shelter to serve 'Connect', the local authority's demand responsive bus service. These enhancements directly supported Bedwyn station as a key hub for the local area. The station forecourt has been transformed, placing sustainable transport options at its heart.

Looking ahead

Integrated Transport is ultimately about people and place. It is about making journeys simpler, easier and better connected for the people who use our network every day. Whether travelling to work, visiting friends and family or exploring the region for leisure, customers increasingly expect journeys to feel connected, simple and easy to navigate.

Across the GWR network, there is already strong evidence of what can be achieved when organisations work together. Rail Link services in Devon and Cornwall have helped communities become better connected to the railway through integrated ticketing, clearer information, coordinated marketing and reliable onward bus connections. Elsewhere, partnership working has improved wayfinding, cycle parking, station forecourts and links to airports, town centres and major destinations. These schemes may often begin as small interventions, but together they help create a more joined-up and attractive public transport network.

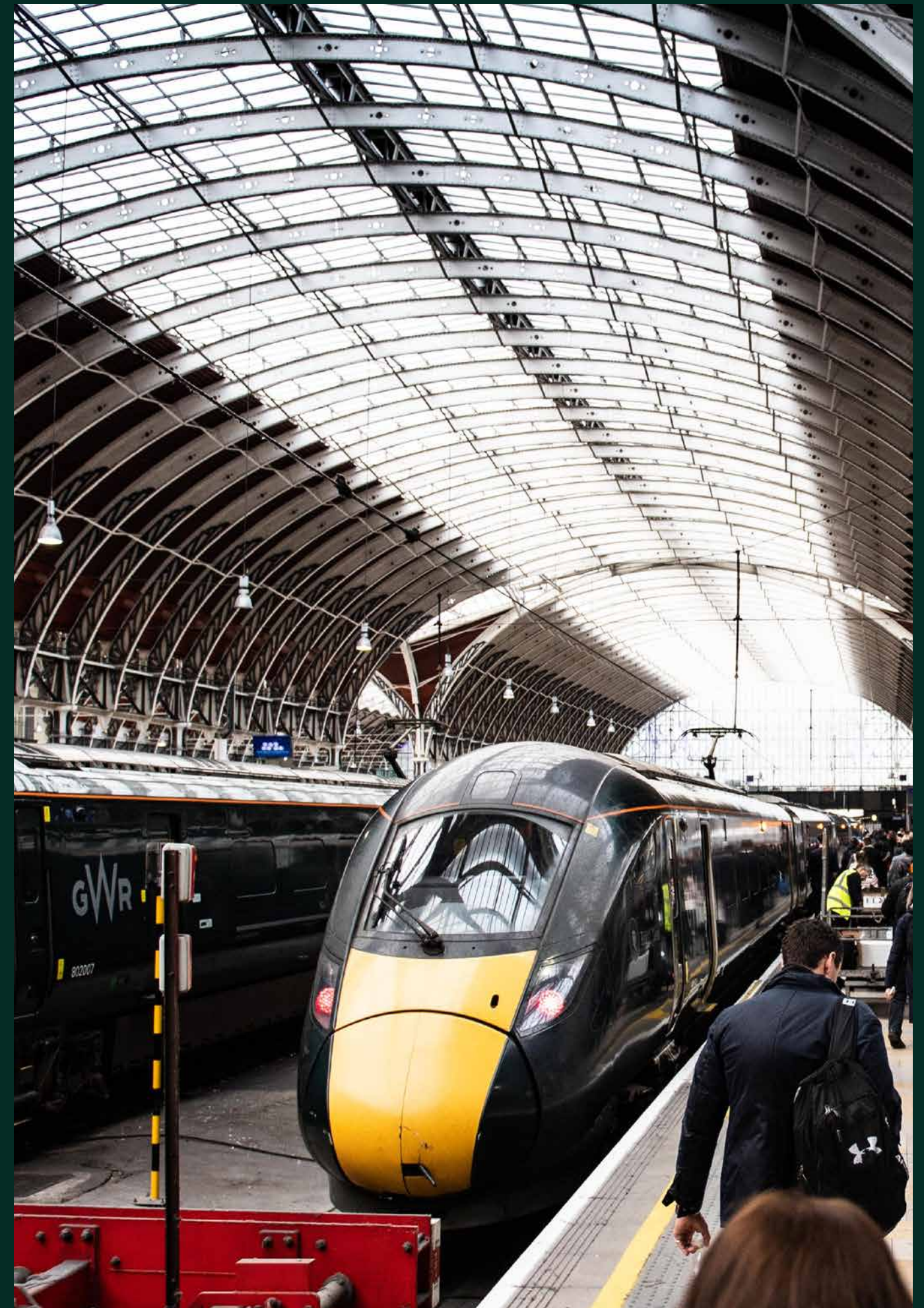
The importance of this work will only continue to grow. Across our region, towns and cities are expanding, new housing developments are being brought forward and expectations around sustainable travel are changing. Proposals linked to developments at Brabazon in Bristol, Heyford in Oxfordshire, Marlcombe in Devon and Plymouth all highlight the opportunity to better connect new communities to the railway from the outset.

At the same time, the railway itself is entering a period of change. As GWR and Network Rail continue to work more closely together, there is an opportunity to take a more integrated approach to stations, onward travel and the wider customer journey. No single organisation can deliver truly seamless journeys alone. Success depends on collaboration between the railway, local authorities, transport operators, businesses, developers, community groups and the people who use the network every day.

Working with partners, we have identified a wide range of opportunities across the network. These include schemes to improve bus and rail interchanges, strengthen walking and cycling links, enhance station environments and support new development and growth areas. Many of these are early-stage opportunities, but together they reflect the scale of ambition and possibility that exists. More importantly, they demonstrate what can happen when organisations bring together local priorities with a shared ambition to improve journeys and strengthen connections between communities.

This is not a fixed list of projects or a closed conversation. We want to continue working with partners across the network to shape new ideas, refine existing proposals and explore how Integrated Transport can improve journeys and strengthen connections between communities. None of this can be delivered alone. Partnership will remain central to making these ideas a reality.

Integrated Transport is not simply about infrastructure or interchange. It is about creating a railway that feels more connected to the places it serves; one that supports sustainable growth, strengthens communities and gives people greater confidence to choose public transport for more of their journey. By continuing to work together, we can build a network that is more accessible, more joined-up and better connected for the future.



Integrated Transport network map



Contacts

GWR

Nicholas Reid

Integrated Transport Manager

07921402980

nicholas.reid@gwr.com

GWR

Helen Scholes

Senior Partnerships Marketing Manager

07977741128

helen.scholes@gwr.com

