

Special Board Meeting Paper	
Jun 18 BM B 1.0	
Purpose of report	<input type="checkbox"/> Decision ¹ <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion / debate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information only ²
Sensitive Information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If sensitive, protective marking³	
Date of Meeting	12 June 2018
Agenda Item	B1
Report Title	GWR Contact Centre Update
Sponsor	David Sidebottom
Author(s)	Nina Howe



1. Summary

The Board will recall that Mark Hopwood, Managing Director of Great Western Railway (GWR) attended our March Board meeting in 2017 to talk about the significant complaints backlog affecting GWR's contact centre last year.

The backlog was eventually cleared however Transport Focus has continued to see high numbers of appeals, indeed GWR had the highest number of complaint appeals recorded by us for 2017-18 (1269) and they have consistently remained in our top three highest outstanding appeals of all the TOCs we deal with. A large proportion of these relate to process issues, such as delays in the issuing of compensation and goodwill payments, and the quality of response to passenger complaints or inquiries. Poor current service performance experienced by passengers is also a growing issue.

We have been told that GWR has continued to invest a large amount of resource into trying to drive improvements in the contact centre. We have also continued to raise concerns with GWR management and our appeals handling team have regular meetings and case reviews with a Great Western's Head of Customer Relations.

The session will provide the Transport Focus Board with a useful opportunity to explore what action GWR has taken over the past year to resolve ongoing issues with its contact centre and whether the lessons from last year's backlog have been effectively imbedded.

The meeting also provides the opportunity to discuss wider GWR passenger issues.

While the upgrade programme continues apace, and the promised benefits of new or cascaded trains and greater capacity are starting to arrive, its delivery also means that GWR and its passengers are facing a number of challenges, both in terms of the volume of engineering work and also poor performance. Indeed, we have seen an increase in the number of appeals referring to poor performance and over-crowding. It is clear that there is a real focus on performance within both GWR and Network Rail Western Route, however passengers continue to experience delays, cancellations and short-formations (exacerbating crowding). Transport Focus is continuing to highlight the passenger impact of poor performance both directly and through the Western Route Supervisory Board.

The Board will also be aware from its meeting on 15th May of the national issues surrounding T-

¹ If a decision is required, or you are asking for the paper to be formally noted, please set this out in section 2

² If for information only, please make clear in section 1 **why** this information is being provided

³ ie **OFFICIAL/SENSITIVE**: plus COMMERCIAL / POLICY / MANAGEMENT-STAFF / PERSONAL PROTECT

12 Informed Traveller and the specific issues facing GWR as a result of the major upgrade programme. As well as pushing for a resolution of the contributing factors to the T-6 failures (primarily late notice track access requests), we have also been encouraging GWR to improve the warnings they provide to passengers where information in online journey planners is known to be inaccurate.

6. Equalities screen

Sometimes, an equalities impact assessment (EIA) is required for a given report, proposal or project. To help decide whether an EIA is required, a screen must be undertaken based on the information provided above. The screen seeks answers to four questions which are used to determine impact on the protected characteristics – major, minor or none (default). Please choose the correct impact value and, if **major**, link it to an explanation below.

Gender	Age	Sexual orient'n	Disability	Marital status	Political belief	Religious belief	Racial group
1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?							
None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?							
None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?							
					None	None	None
4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?							
					None	None	None

Summary of **major** impacts

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Conclusion (the board's consideration of this paper may result in a change of conclusion)

Based on the information above, and having regard to the guidance below, the sponsor and author of this paper agree that (✓)	
(a) A full equalities impact assessment is not required	✓
(b) A full equalities impact assessment is not required at this time but the impact values above suggest the matter should be kept under view during the lifetime of the project	
(c) A full equalities impact assessment is required and should be completed during the lifetime of the project	
(d) A full equalities impact assessment is required and should be completed immediately	
Please provide a brief explanation of why you have arrived at this conclusion	
<i>The proposal has little no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations and / or is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.</i>	