



Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 21 November 2023

Councillors present:

Gina Blomefield
Angus Jenkinson
Dilys Neill

Gary Selwyn
Michael Vann
Clare Turner

Officers present:

Ana Prelici, Democratic Services Officer

Observers:

Councillor Daryl Corps, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind and Jeremy Theyer

Guests:

Tom Pierpoint, GWR Director of Business Development

OS.305 Apologies

There were no apologies.

OS.306 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

OS.307 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

OS.308 Future Plans for Provision of Railway Services

The Chair stated that the Great Western Railway (GWR) Director of Business Development had initially been invited to discuss Rail Ticket Office closures, the decision of which had been reversed. However, the Chair still felt the meeting would be useful.

The Director of Business Development for GWR introduced the item, providing an overview of the current challenges faced by the railway industry, including financial constraints and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. They highlighted GWR's commitment to improving services, mentioning successes such as the Green Park station in Reading which had been opened earlier in 2023. The Director of Business Development also discussed ongoing industrial relations challenges and efforts to improve performance.

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Members asked questions of the GWR representative and discussed the following points;

- At Green Park and Newbury station, the ticket office is a low, glassless desk to encourage customers to use machines, but still provide support to those unable to use the machines.
- Frustrations were raised regarding cancelled trains.
- One of the Members representing Moreton-in-Marsh raised a constituent's issue, who had raised issues regarding the waiting area. As it stands the waiting area would remain closed when the station wasn't staffed, although GWR were open to discussion if local community groups wished to assist with this. The GWR Director for Business Development stated that they would investigate ways to open the Kemble and Moreton-in-Marsh waiting areas, they were at present closed for stretches of day due to antisocial behaviour, which had caused complaints from local residents.
- The GWR Director for Business Development stated that they would take away a member query regarding the solution for the repair work on the Moreton-in-Marsh foot bridge, which was an ongoing issue.
- The Robin bookable bus service run by Gloucestershire County Council was connecting train stations to the North of the Cotswolds. Members suggested that GWR link up with this, as it was currently underused, and the Director for Business Development for GWR agreed this would be a good idea.
- Working days, including weekends, were key to the industrial disputes, so although weekend travel had increased, it was difficult to increase staffing on these days. GWR recognised the need to do so in order to service passengers who were travelling for leisure.

The Chair summed up the discussion and thanked the Director for Business Development for attending the meeting. The Chair stated that they now received emails with business updates from GWR and encouraged the rest of the members to sign up to these as they were very useful. The Director for Business Development stated that members could be added to the stakeholder database.

The Meeting commenced at 12.00 pm and closed at 1.15 pm

Chair

(END)