

Update on recent train delays & cancellations from Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways June 2018



In July 2017, new Class 166 trains (or “Turbos”) were introduced to the Severn Beach Line (SBL) as an upgrade from the previous trains. They have far more seats per carriage, are more comfortable & have more space for bikes.

Initially the Turbos proved difficult to operate on the SBL. One of the issues with the Turbo trains was that doors could only be operated from the very front and very back. It took longer for the guard to check the train before closing the doors, particularly on curved platforms. Intermediate door controls have now been installed on all 16 Bristol Turbos.

There have been continuing problems with Turbos breaking down with door, brake or traction issues. GWR are focussing on quality control at the depot to reduce the incidence of these problems.

When an earlier train is delayed, or an issue arises elsewhere in the network, the tight timetable means the service lacks the resilience to recover. There is a risk that trains will run progressively later, and so GWR have turned some trains back at Avonmouth, or even Clifton Down, to make up lost time.

From May 2018, a standby unit has been largely available at Bristol Temple Meads to swap in to the SBL when a previous service is delayed. This has reduced turnbacks and cancellations, but the service is not yet at an acceptable standard.

Network Rail upgrade works continue to impact the SBL and other regional services. Over Easter 2018, Network Rail upgraded the signalling in the Bristol area.

The Filton Bank four-tracking project will continue over summer 2018. There will be blockades over the weekends of 7th/8th July and 14th/15th July and also for three weeks from Saturday 27th October until Sunday 18th November. Buses will replace trains during these periods, both on the SBL and between Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol Parkway.

Whilst these works are carried out, Network Rail have imposed a 10mph speed limit in the Temple Meads area - this is contributing to delays.

From November 2018, the additional pair of tracks will greatly increase the resilience of the Severn Beach Line by reducing the need for signallers to slot local services between inter-city services.

FOSBR have met with GWR four times to discuss disruption and we are in correspondence with Network Rail to ask for increased priority for key trains until the Filton Bank four-tracking is in place. We continue to monitor the number of cancellations and turnbacks. The Managing Director of GWR has committed to working with Network Rail to improve the SBL service.

Please continue to tell us of your concerns to pass on to GWR.

What to do if you are unhappy with the current service

FOSBR suggest you contact some or all of the following to tell them how the current problems are affecting you and why the train service is important:

- GWR complaints: gwrfeedback@gwr.com
- Twitter: [@GWRHelp](https://twitter.com/GWRHelp)
- Councillor Mhairi Threlfall, Bristol City Council cabinet member for Transport: cllr.mhairi.threlfall@bristol.gov.uk
- Metro Mayor Tim Bowles: mayor@westofengland-ca.gov.uk
- Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees: mayor@bristol.gov.uk
- Your MP: you can find their contact details by entering your postcode at: www.theyworkforyou.com/mps/
- Copy to us on campaigns@fosbr.org.uk
- Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways, www.fosbr.org.uk and on Facebook and Twitter ([@FOSBR](https://twitter.com/FOSBR)) to tell us about your experiences

What to do if your service is turned back at Clifton Down

GWR have arranged for train tickets to be accepted on the no. 3 bus or any other relevant buses; if the bus driver does not accept the ticket please retain the bus ticket and GWR will reimburse the cost of the ticket. We have also requested a text update service to alert passengers when a train is being cancelled or turned back. Please check the GWR website for updates.

What to do if your service is turned back at Avonmouth

We have asked GWR to prioritise the Severn Beach trains to run through to Severn Beach without being turned back, so Severn Beach trains should be more reliable. GWR have said they will pay for taxis when the Severn Beach train is turned back at Avonmouth. Please use the information point at Severn Beach Station to advise GWR of the number of passengers waiting.

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