Great Western Society Limited

Didcot Railway Centre

Policy Development and Approval Policy – Version 5, July 2025

Vision
Our vision is for Didcot Railway Centre to be recognised for the international importance of its collection and the value of bringing to life the golden age of steam as a dynamic Living Museum.

Mission
Our mission is to fulfil our potential as a heritage venue at the centre of its community. Accessible to all, striving to engage and inspire the widest possible audiences in the history and heritage of the Great Western Railway – the pioneering transport infrastructure that laid the foundations for contemporary transport innovation.

Values
Authentic | Welcoming | Engaging | Innovative | Great Quality | Sustainable.

Purpose and scope

Great Western Society (GWS) policies and procedures are approved by the GWS Board or by the Senior Management Team (SMT). The overall plan, the GWS Policies & Procedures Approval Programme, is managed by the Business Support Manager and overseen by the SMT. This document summarises the policy development and approval process.

This process excludes:

- specific collection-related Great Western Preservations (GWP) and Great Western Trust (GWT) policies and procedures which are approved by their respective Boards. However, overarching policies, specifically Collections Development, Documentation and Care & Conservation Policies, should be agreed by all three Boards (GWP, GWT and GWS) prior to approval by the GWS Board, as Didcot Railway Centre's governing body.
- operational procedures which are set out in the Rule Book. However, any major changes should be submitted to the GWS Board for approval. Changes are discussed and agreed by the Operations Committee, notified to operational staff at the Annual Ops Meeting and take effect from that date.

Policy development and review process

The SMT will commission each policy review, nominate a policy author and agree a timescale for delivery. The policy author will be notified by the Business Support Manager when the review is to commence which will be 8 weeks before the approval of the existing policy expires. The policy author will publish a notice in the Didcot Flyer announcing the consultation process and asking for feedback. When the consultation period (a minimum of three weeks) is complete, the policy author will consider the feedback received, together with any legal, procedural or good practice updates. Depending on the feedback, a further consultation with key managers or individuals may be required.

The following processes will apply, depending on whether the policy is for approval by the SMT or the Board.

- SMT approval - The Business Support Manager will circulate the final draft policy to the SMT for approval at least one week prior to the SMT approval meeting.

- Board approval – The Business Support Manager will circulate the final draft policy to the SMT for review at least one week prior to the SMT review meeting and, once agreed, will send it to the Secretary for circulation to the Board and for adding to the Board agenda.

Once the policy has been approved by the SMT or the Board, the Business Support Manager will arrange publication of the policy as described below.

Disciplinary, grievance and problem solving procedures

Changes to the Disciplinary, Grievance and Problem Solving Procedures affect both the Staff Handbook and the Handbook for Volunteers. Once approved, the procedure will come into effect when it is published on HOPS and on the DRC website (a paper copy will also be posted on the Notice Board in the Journal Room). Changes should be incorporated into the Staff Handbook and the Handbook for Volunteers at their next review and in the interim the new procedures will apply.

Staff and volunteers will be notified of the new policy through HOPS and through their line managers and group leaders. Staff will be formally notified of changes through their line managers.

Other policies and procedures

Other policies will come into force when they are published. They will also be published on the DRC website (for public facing policies and procedures – Great Western Society/GWS Policies and Procedures) and posted in the Journal Room.

The publication of policies will be announced through HOPS.

There are a few specialist policies and procedures (eg documentation procedures) that are only relevant to a few individuals who will have been involved in their development. Others (eg Emergency Plan) are not relevant for general publication as they contain personal data. These are not on the website or in the Journal Room but will be communicated to those involved and their implementation will be announced on HOPS.

Decommissioning policies

Occasionally there will be a need to decommission a policy. In this case, a proposal to decommission the policy, outlining the reasons and the impact of decommissioning, shall be made to the approving body, either the SMT or the GWS Board.

Communication

Once approved by the Board, this process will be communicated through HOPs, the Didcot Flyer and the line management structure.

Approval

This process was discussed by the SMT on 26 June 2025 and approved by the GWS Board on 19 July 2025. It will be reviewed every two years.

Ann Middleton
July 2025
Version 5