

# Journey to a Better Future

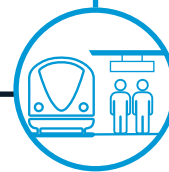
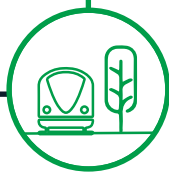


## Our Sustainability Strategy

*We're on a journey to better*

South Western  
 Railway

# Contents





# We're on a journey to a better future



## **Our vision is to serve, safeguard, and strengthen our planet, places, and people.**

As one of the UK's largest train operating companies, getting our customers from A to B will always remain our central mission. The last few years have shown us, however, that we urgently need to do this in a more sustainable way. To meet the challenges of the coming decades, we're proud to share our new sustainability strategy with you: Our journey to a better future.

This strategy sets out how South Western Railway will continue to lead the rail industry with our ambitions for a more sustainable future. We're already the UK's first train operator to set out a robust and cost-effective roadmap to net zero carbon emissions by 2040 at the latest, ten years ahead of the legal deadline.

We've made progress in other areas too, such as expanding the wonderful cohort of community rail initiatives across our network and enhancing the biodiversity around our stations to make them local havens for nature.

We can't wait to build on this and do more. Sustainability is a constant process of learning, renewal, and progress. Since the pandemic, everything has changed for us; from the expectations of our customers to how we do business.

Rail travel has always been a greener transport choice, yet we must do more to help tackle local and global challenges from the climate crisis and make a positive impact on our communities. This commitment applies while our customers are on their journeys and beyond.

Our strategy isn't simply about trains and tracks, it's about the people who run and use them and what they want and expect from the railway.

We will strive to improve day-to-day activities to make our service better for everyone: our customers, our colleagues, and the region we're proud to serve.

A sustainable railway is one that caters for everyone as our population changes over time. We will strengthen our engagement with colleagues and customers of all backgrounds and needs, making our network more accessible, and empowering them to do their jobs and make their journeys with greater ease and comfort.

Investing in our people is just as important as investing in our buildings and fleet. By making sure our workplace environment is inclusive and supportive, we can help a wider range of people to develop their potential and realise a shared sense of purpose. Wellbeing is at the heart of a sustainable organisation.

We know people care about more than just their journey. They want a more sustainable world, and we are committed to helping them build it.

Our bold new vision will help make our region cleaner and greener. It will be place where wildlife can flourish, and where we can all breathe easier; where every station is reflective of its community and is as unique as the people walking through its doors.

A series of pledges to achieve this are set out in this strategy; from ensuring that we are net biodiversity positive at all our stations and depots by 2030, to securing the top accreditation under the Government's Inclusive Transport Leaders Scheme, and publishing and actioning a diversity, equality and inclusion strategy roadmap.

These pledges are the starting point. It's up to us to keep challenging what's possible and pushing further, right now and for decades to come, to make things better for our planet, places, and people.

*Claire Mann*

**Claire Mann**  
Managing Director  
South Western Railway

**Next stop:  
net zero by 2040**





# Our sustainability strategy

Our journey to a better future is built around three key areas:

## Planet, Places and People



### Better for our planet

Tackling climate change and protecting nature

#### Bring emissions down

**Goal:** By 2040 at the latest, we will become net zero across our scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions

#### Waste not

**Goal:** By 2025 we will make sure that 85% of our waste is reused, recycled or composted

#### Bloom beautifully

**Goal:** By 2030 we will achieve net positive impact on biodiversity across our stations and depots



### Better for our places

Making our stations a local force for good

#### Stations and spaces

**Goal:** We will support community rail partnerships and station adoption schemes across at least 75% of our network

#### Community support

**Goal:** Each year, we will enrich the communities we serve through commercial and charitable support

#### Easy access

**Goal:** By 2024 we will achieve the top accreditation under the government's Inclusive Transport Leaders Scheme to improve disabled people's access to the railway system



### Better for our people

Unleashing opportunity and nurturing wellbeing

#### Upskill talent

**Goal:** By 2025 and beyond, our entire apprenticeship programme will achieve Gold standard in the Investors in People 'We Invest in Apprentices' accreditation

#### Deliver inclusivity

**Goal:** We will publish and action our long-term Diversity, Equality and Inclusion strategy and roadmap

#### Look out for each other

**Goal:** We will ensure all our colleagues feel safe and easily able to access therapeutic support for challenges affecting physical, emotional or mental wellbeing

## Foundations: what we build on

International standards

Water management

Climate change adaptation

Sustainable sourcing

Sustainability reporting

Embedding sustainability

Training

# A railway for the future

Change in the world is happening at an ever-faster rate, creating huge challenges but also opportunity to be part of the solution.

Our sustainability strategy prepares us for both shifting global trends and railway industry reform. It sets us on the right track to becoming more sustainable, with plans and actions for the next five years and with the future firmly in view.

Our strategy is built around:

**The Sustainable Rail Strategy, developed by the Rail Safety Standard Board**

– the industry-wide strategy to align efforts, inspire change, and realise sustainable rail

**MTR Corporation's sustainability objectives and FirstGroup's Mobility Beyond Today plan**

– the strategic frameworks set out by our owning groups

**The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals**

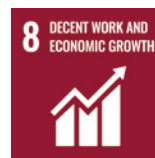
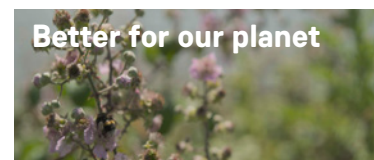
– the global blueprint for actions to a more sustainable future

Our journey to a better future focuses actions on three themes: Planet, Places and People



## Theme

## Supporting a specific United Nations Sustainable Development Goal







# Better for our planet

Next stop: becoming net zero  
across our greenhouse gas  
emissions by 2040





# Better for our planet

Tackling climate change and protecting nature

By bringing emissions down, reducing waste and encouraging nature, we can deliver a more pleasant journey for our passengers – and contribute to a greener future for the South West and a stable climate for all.

## Bring emissions down

**Goal:** By 2040 at the latest, we will become net zero across our scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions

## Waste not

**Goal:** By 2025 we will make sure that 85% of our waste is reused, recycled or composted

## Bloom beautifully

**Goal:** By 2030 we will achieve net positive impact on biodiversity across our stations and depots



## Bring emissions down

### Why it matters to us

Climate crisis science is indisputable and the effects are plain to see. There has been a dramatic increase in extreme weather globally and we've experienced changes locally across our network.

It signals the clear warning that we must dramatically curb global warming to prevent the worst effects of climate change.

Taking action has already begun. We've joined with other companies leading the move to net zero by setting emission reduction targets which are grounded in climate science. As part of the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) we share the aim to limit global warming to within 1.5°C.

Our target is to hit net zero by 2040, ten years ahead of the UK's target.

To achieve this, we need to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make sure any remaining are balanced by carbon removals.

### Our plans

#### Cut carbon

By 2040 we will achieve our net zero science-based target (SBTi) by reaching net zero across our scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions\*

#### Encourage greener travel

By 2025 all of our stations will have facilities to support customers who want to 'model shift' by using lower carbon transport to and from our stations, such as travelling by bike instead of by car

#### Understand air quality

We will develop a joint project with specialists to assess and improve air quality at our stations



#### Case study

### Lights, action!

Over 16,000 old light bulbs were replaced by LED fittings at 165 stations in our largest energy efficiency project. It's cut energy consumption by a fifth and saves 1,164 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year – enough to charge over 450 million iPhones!

#### \* What does scope 1, 2 and 3 mean?

These three 'scopes' describe emissions a business creates in its own operations and from its wider chain of suppliers and customers. The term 'scope' comes from the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, the world's most widely-used greenhouse gas accounting standard. Scope 1 and 2 are emissions we own or control and scope 3 emissions are ones we don't but are indirectly responsible for.

## Lighter steps ahead

Carbon footprint is a catch-all term for the amount of greenhouse gas something or someone is responsible for. Put simply, it is our impact on the climate crisis. It is measured in carbon dioxide equivalent or CO<sub>2</sub>e, the sum of all greenhouse gas emissions rolled into one.

As a rail company, our annual carbon footprint is 301,750 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. The yearly average for each of us in the UK is 12.7 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e.

Is that a lot? Well, it all adds up. Globally, locally, and individually. We all need to get carbon lighter.

## Key actions towards net zero

### Our operations and supply chain

Carbon from activities like procurement and travel for business (scope 3)

These indirect emissions – through our ‘value chain’ of suppliers and contractors – account for over 50% of our carbon footprint.

#### To reduce emissions we will:

- Work with our supply chain to reduce emissions through specifications, contract management processes and by gaining commitment to their own science based carbon reduction targets
- Switch our car fleet to low carbon
- Fit 100 electric vehicle (EV) charging points at our stations by 2025

### Our trains

Carbon from traction energy to run our services (scope 1)

45% of our overall emissions come from our trains: 34% from electric trains and 11% from diesel trains.

#### To reduce emissions we will:

- Source renewable energy for our electrified train fleet
- Deliver a programme to replace our diesel trains with a lower carbon alternative

### Our stations and depots

Carbon from energy used in our buildings (scopes 1 and 2)

Around 3% of our emissions come from our buildings – but they offer varied opportunities for decarbonisation. We’re working closely with Network Rail to explore the feasibility of on-site renewable energy.

#### To reduce emissions we will:

- Install building management systems to better control energy use
- Retrofit any remaining standard lighting to LEDs
- Phase out use of natural gas by 2025

**Read more, and see the route map to our final destination of net zero by 2040, [here](#).**





### Wheel better

Rail is an environmentally friendly mode of transport. Combine it with walking or cycling and it's the ticket for travelling more sustainably.

We encourage going by foot or by bike to and from our stations. Cycling especially has boomed since the pandemic. Our stations have become more bike-friendly, with 4,000 cycle storage spaces installed in the past five years.

We've also stepped up support to customers keen to reach their closest station with the lowest carbon footprint by working with local councils to develop bike hire schemes and bus integration projects.



### Clear air

Air pollutants can be harmful to the environment and our health. We take our duty to reduce our air emissions very seriously, with measures designed to protect everyone.

A trial at 13 stations is assessing monthly air quality to give us clearer insights into how they may impact local air pollution.

Through our new air strategy, we're also identifying our pollution hotspots and partnering with local councils to tackle issues together. Fitting green infrastructure is one way, such as living walls: self-sufficient vertical gardens to boost air quality and biodiversity.

## Waste not

### Why it matters to us

Waste is damaging to the world's environment, polluting our landscapes, rivers and oceans and adding to greenhouse gas emissions.

The world's 'take-make-dispose' linear economy is outdated and is the cause of many of today's most challenging environmental problems.

In a circular economy, resources are kept in use for as long as possible, maximising their lifespan before the materials are eventually reused and recycled. We want to see more of this and contribute to the circle: using only what we need and repurposing and recycling materials at the end of their lengthy use.

### Our plans

#### Maintain landfill diversion

We will continue to divert 100% of our operational waste from landfill

#### Improve waste recycling

By 2025 we will reuse, recycle or compost at least 85% of our waste. Any remaining waste will be used to generate energy

#### Enable the circular economy

By 2026 100% of materials used through key contractual partnerships will meet our circular procurement standard

### Case study

#### Wasting no time with waste

Through our partnership with specialist waste recyclers SWRnewstar, we collect and separate all non-hazardous waste including rubbish left on trains and in station bins.

All sorted, it goes to a materials recycling facility. Nothing goes to landfill.

Even food waste isn't wasted. A process known as anaerobic digestion recovers renewable energy. In a year, 78 tonnes of our segregated food waste generates 23,400 kilowatt hours of energy. That's enough electricity to power 70 homes for a month!







### Rubbish reimaged

Over 2,000 tonnes of waste is generated each year from our operational and maintenance tasks and from customers using our trains, stations and retailers. All of this waste is diverted from landfill with 77% recycled (up from 27% in 2017) and the remaining 23% made into energy derived fuel (RDF) used by power stations in place of fossil fuels.

To keep improving we will:

- Look at ways in our processes and ordering to use fewer materials and so reduce opportunities for waste in the first place
- Continue to support waste segregation officers at our large stations and traincare depots
- Introduce more recycling facilities, including finding more locations for food recycling

## Bloom beautifully

### Why it matters to us

The UK has one of the lowest levels of biodiversity in Europe, with a 13% loss of wildlife since the 1970s.

Just a few changes can help make a difference. Championing nature eases climate disruption, helping us to adapt by providing natural flood protection and sources of food, water and shade to the many species in our region.

Through our plans, we are committed to becoming biodiversity net positive by 2030.

### Our plans

#### Encourage nature in stations and depots

By 2024 we will have a biodiversity action plan in place for 50 locations and with improvement programmes already underway in half of them

#### Deliver community gardens

By 2024 we will jointly create at least five community gardens in partnership with Network Rail

#### Enhance trackside wildlife

We will create wildlife corridors through working with Network Rail

### Case study

#### Looking out for nature

Recognising the potential of our stations to offer unique habitats for insects, animals and plants to blossom, we're on a mission to create wild gardens!

They might not look fancy but these are areas designed and maintained with nature in mind.

The new iSpy initiative invites people to spot the steps we are making – from small changes in how we manage vegetation to bigger habitat creation projects.



#### What does net positive impact on biodiversity mean?

If a development of ours impacts on natural habitats we will enhance or restore biodiversity to those areas. We'll do this through habitat creation on our own land and off-site in partnership with others. We're using the UK government's biodiversity metric to measure improvements and monitor progress to achieving our goal.



### Backing nature

We've changed the way we manage our vegetation. The focus now is on natural gardening, such as introducing wildflower meadows, protecting hedgerows, and installing homes for reptiles and bugs.

Across our network we've planted fruit trees and micro wildlife gardens. There are also bee-friendly flowering planters, thanks to our partnership with the Bee Friendly Trust and The Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB).

Living walls have been fitted to boost biodiversity and air quality in urban locations. Designed with urban landscapers Biotecture, they are made of carefully chosen plants to attract native insects.

Our depot teams share this enthusiasm for wildlife. They've dug fishponds and planted trees and wildflowers. At our newest depot, Feltham, they've developed a habitat management plan so these natural environments will continue to flourish.

To further guide our greening activities, we're creating biodiversity action plans for 50 stations and depots by 2024. Half of these will also have their improvement programmes underway by 2024 at the latest.

### Gardens to share and enjoy

Our biodiversity action plans are helping us to reach out and spread the benefits to local communities. We want our outdoor spaces to be enjoyed and used to grow produce and discover more about nature.

We aim to have developed five new community gardens with our local partners and Network Rail by 2024.

### Tracks on the wild side

Natural land along our tracks will be enhanced as a result of our shared aim with Network Rail to create wildlife corridors. We will maximise the impact of this work by implementing biodiversity action plans.





## Better for our places

Next step: support Community Rail Partnerships and station adoption schemes across at least 75% of our network





# Better for our places

Making our stations a local force for good

We can strengthen local communities by supporting small businesses and charities, sharing our spaces, and making it easier for people to access rail transport.

## Stations and spaces

**Goal:** We will support community rail partnerships and station adoption schemes across at least 75% of our network

## Community support

**Goal:** Each year, we will enrich the communities we serve through commercial and charitable support

## Easy access

**Goal:** By 2024 we will achieve the top accreditation under the government's Inclusive Transport Leaders Scheme to improve disabled people's access to the railway system



## Stations and spaces

### Why it matters to us

We've over 180 stations spread throughout London and the South West and we want to positively impact the communities that we serve. Stations aren't just places for trains. They can be local hubs for community use, with multi-activity spaces and underused areas creatively given a new lease of life.

### Our plans

#### Support community partnerships

We will support and enhance at least 12 high-quality community rail partnerships plus at least 50 station adoption schemes

#### Improve our stations

By 2025 we will set up 20 or more improvement schemes in collaboration with industry partners to improve the environmental impact and social value of our stations

#### Make space available

By 2025 we will repurpose at least 11 station spaces so they're available for local community groups or charities to use

### Case study

#### Free space for free food

Redundant space at Swaythling and Petersfield stations has reopened with a new purpose. Hampshire Community Rail Partnership refurbished the rooms and set up shop to distribute free food from supermarkets which would otherwise go to waste.

It started with the aim of cutting food waste and has evolved into meeting local needs.

Anyone is welcome to come into the pop-up shops to collect a bag of whatever they need. Volunteers play a vital role, picking up surplus food from supermarkets and serving local people.

In the past two years, Swaythling station shop has collected food equivalent to 29,000 meals and saved 38,500 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Little is wasted. Remaining food is used by churches and other local groups. Food past its best is given to farms for animal feed.

The two shops are branching out with other initiatives, such as school uniform swaps and a bank of baby supplies.



## Support for the community voice

We're lucky to have local groups within our region with a passion for the railways.

Community rail partnerships are a growing grassroots movement. They engage communities and help people get the most from their railways, promoting social inclusion and sustainable travel and working alongside train operators like us to bring about improvements.

We will continue to work with and support these positive partnerships.

Station adoption groups are another success story; reflecting and giving a voice to the communities they serve.

As well as engaging people in volunteering and community pride, these groups play a vital role in helping us make our stations welcoming and attractive places. Their activities often extend beyond tidying and planting, to include community projects such as art displays and 'rail to ramble' walking routes.

In the last few years we've grown the number of station adoption groups by 1000%, from seven to 80. They now cover more than a third of our stations.



### Case study

## New journeys for our stations

If trains powered the Industrial Revolution can stations power the post-Covid future for local communities? This is the question posed by The Community Brain, a community interest company which has adopted Tolworth station near Surbiton and set about realising its potential as a flexible and vital community space.

It refurbished a vandalised taxi office to create Baking Ideas, a creative space to encourage ideas and share activities. Its community kitchen offers a place for workshops and socialising around the station area.

Other empty spots were soon reimagined. Artists were commissioned to create murals and sculptures for the station. Scrubland was turned into a wildlife garden, The Cutting, to give residents a safe outdoor meeting place and the chance to take cuttings from herbs and other plants. A collective growing space, Crop Ups, is also taking root.

With less commuting and some station sites becoming outdated, Tolworth shows the inspiring possibilities for new approaches reflecting local needs and ambitions.

#### Case study

### All aboard to dig in

Our stations aren't just buildings along a track. They're a welcoming place for passengers on their journey and home to a diverse community of wildlife.

To boost the care of our stations, 70 of our colleagues gave up their time for a spring clean and autumn spruce-up of almost 50 stations.

They created six wildflower meadows, along with carpets of spring flowers by planting 17,000 bulbs. Bird boxes and bug hotels were installed, and bridges, walls, canopies and benches given a sparkling clean.

As public spaces, our stations are a special fusion of the built and natural environment. By making them greener and more attractive places, we aim to boost people's sense of wellbeing and connection to the needs of nature.



### Making room for renewal

Stations are living, evolving places. Many have space to share. We want to see it put to good use – just like it has at Swaythling and Petersfield stations for community food shops (see page 18).

Similar space-giving projects include bringing a long disused building at Shawford station near Winchester back to life. It's being transformed into a community hub, with plans for a café, cycle facilities and meeting space for local groups like the Cub Scouts.

All the buildings are leased on a very low (peppercorn) rent.

We expect to hand over more disused spaces to community use as we continue to find future ways for our stations to serve our communities.

### Refreshing stations

Along with Network Rail, we have a responsibility to maintain and improve our stations to best serve the community.

Every year we make station improvements, from upgrading waiting room seating to refurbishing the toilets. A lick of paint can make all the difference. Between autumn 2021 and spring 2022 we painted over 54 stations.

An extra polish is given to some projects by our dedicated Customer and Communities Improvement Fund, which brings customers and other stakeholders together to make a bigger impact.

By 2025 we will put in place 20 or more improvement schemes in collaboration with industry partners. In each, the focus will always be on trying to reduce environmental impact and increase social value.



## Community support

### Why it matters to us

Railways connect people. Not just geographically but by a sense of community. That connection supports and sustains growth, of us and our environment.

The vibrancy and wellbeing of local communities really counts. It drives us to improve day-to-day while strengthening the community bonds in our region.

Enriching the communities we serve through commercial and charitable support is a positive way for us to make impact. We will do this by seeking to embrace and understand local needs so we can support and celebrate the uniqueness of our communities.

### Our plans

#### Understand our communities' needs

Each year we will complete a social value report to identify the benefits added through our work and where we can do better

#### Maintain charity partnerships

We will support at least one charity partnership in each regional area and give these approved charity groups free access to our stations to promote their cause

#### Boost local business use

We will make sure that our procurement processes allow small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to tender a quote for applicable work under £50,000

#### Help safeguard people at risk

We will work collaboratively on projects to support people on our network in vulnerable situations including delivering actions of the Rough Sleeping on Rail Charter



### Case study

#### Bikes for life

Abandoned bicycles left at our stations are being used to fund life-saving defibrillators and training for the community.

The unclaimed bikes are donated to the Alex Wardle Foundation. The charity was set up by an employee of South Western Railway in memory of his 23-year-old son who tragically died while playing football from Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome (SADS), caused by a disturbance in the heart's rhythm.

The cycles are repaired and sold to raise funds for projects to improve awareness of SADS and put defibrillators into sports clubs and other venues.

Training for the local community and our employees is giving people the confidence to use the equipment and potentially save a life.

## Value in knowing

Understanding local needs means we can serve communities better. To improve this, over the last three years we've been using the Rail Social Value Tool developed by the Rail Safety and Standards Board. This has helped us forecast and monitor social value and measure the benefit our involvement brings.

Together with further social needs analysis, it's helped us to identify opportunities where we can do better. We've developed specific support plans, all reinforced with our commitment to continue working with local groups to help communities thrive.

### Case study

## A time for giving

The festive season is many people's favourite time of the year. But it can fill others with dread rather than cheer. Money worries, loneliness, difficult situations...there are many reasons why Christmas can feel tough.

A gift from a stranger can't solve problems but it can spread a soothing message of goodwill. We set up a Christmas Appeal inviting our colleagues and customers to generously fill a shoebox or donate an individual gift to someone in a vulnerable situation or facing homelessness.

The appeal has snowballed. Last year we donated over 6000 gifts to local charities to distribute across our region. We've now joined forces with two companies we work with, Adecco and STM Group, to make the appeal bigger still so we can support even more people in need.

## Helping charities to help

Small charities can make a big impact. We want to support local charities to make a big difference in our region.

Every two years we ask our people to nominate local charities we can support through our charity panel and our colleague volunteering programme.

**Read more about the work of current charity partners [here](#).**



### Doing business locally

We will continue to engage with small, local businesses through our tender processes and supplier forums.

Our network stretches over 500 miles and we're keen to engage with businesses across all of our routes. We'll make sure all applicable tenders for work under £50,000 includes quotes from local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSEs).

Over the last year we've awarded contract opportunities to 368 SMEs and 83 VCSEs. This is a 35% increase in spend with these local enterprises compared to the previous year.



### Protecting vulnerable people

Many people in vulnerable situations use our transport systems to escape a range of issues.

Being aware of this can reduce their risk. Stepping in and giving the right support can mark a turning point in their lives.

We will work collaboratively to help people at risk by identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns or incidents on our network.

In 2022 we joined others across the rail industry in signing the Rough Sleeping on Rail Charter, aimed at reducing rough sleeping and safeguarding those most vulnerable. We are working with Network Rail and the British Transport Police to progress and deliver its commitments.

We've also achieved accreditation of the Safeguarding on Rail Scheme. This will enhance the part we play in working with other organisations to protect children and adults at risk and help make public transport a safer place.



## Easy access

### Why it matters to us

Travelling by train provides many opportunities – access to work, education, family, friends, social activities, and more. It's good too for the economy and environment, so we want more people to feel welcomed and encouraged to travel with us.

Accessible stations are easier for everyone: people with physical and hidden disabilities, people with children, heavy luggage or shopping and some older people.

With the population undergoing a huge age shift, people are living longer but often with health conditions or limited mobility. We want to be prepared: inclusive and accessible to all our current and future customers.

### Case study

#### Try the train

Trips to 'Try the Train' are an opportunity for those who lack confidence travelling by train to visit our stations and experience a short return journey. We show them the station's facilities and how to find information and buy tickets. Along the way, we explain the support on offer aboard the train.

The trips began in summer 2021 in partnership with Winchester GoLD, a charity that supports young adults with learning disabilities in the South Hampshire area. Visits are organised by a team of employees who volunteer to go beyond their usual roles to act as community ambassadors.

More event days are planned, including for any individual or group feeling nervous or put-off by barriers they may have come across before. By the end of the trip our aim is for participants to be encouraged and more confident to take the train independently.

### Our plans

#### Empower employees with disabilities

By 2023 we will achieve Level 3 in the Disability Confident Leader Programme to help us change attitudes for the better

#### Improve station passenger access

By 2023 we will equip at least 70% of our stations to offer step-free access

#### Listen and learn

We will strengthen our engagement with people with disabilities and other groups to improve what we offer and raise the 'disability confidence' level of our employees

#### Support people with non-visible disabilities

We will trial the use of calm spaces at three or more of our stations to support and increase the confidence of customers with non-visible disabilities





### **Easier access for all**

During autumn 2021, we conducted accessibility 'health checks' at our flagship stations. We've worked hard in recent years to deliver improvements. But we wanted to be sure that the changes made and scheduled are truly making our stations usable for all.

Across our network we're implementing designs that provide obstacle-free, accessible routes to and between platforms.

We aim to provide clear and consistent information at every stage of the works, especially to help people with disabilities or needing extra support.

And we want to do more. By 2023 at least 70% of our stations will be equipped to offer step-free access.

### **Disability confident at work**

Accessibility isn't just about our customers. It's about our people too. That's why we're committed to achieving the UK government's Disability Confident Leader Level 3 accreditation by 2023.

This inclusive scheme is helping us to recruit and retain people from the widest possible pool of talent. Experienced people who will challenge attitudes, increase understanding of disability and help us to further embrace inclusivity in the workplace.

## Ready to listen and learn

Listening to our customers provides us with the opportunity to meet their needs and raise the level of 'disability confidence' in our colleagues.

Recently we ran a workshop with visually impaired customers to better understand what we can do to help them feel safe and confident to travel. We surveyed our stations to understand where tactile paving was damaged or missing, and worked with Network Rail to ensure its repair.

In partnership with Alzheimer's Society, we trialled dementia-friendly signage at Petersfield station to help travellers navigate it independently.

We will improve our employee training with inclusive language guidance and will arrange for our diversity champions to travel with our disabled customers to better grasp the challenges they face.

Our Accessibility and Inclusion Forum continues to help us gain valuable insights on everything from station toilets to the design of the trains of the future.

### Case study

## Seeing a way forward

In an industry first, we are trialling the use of new technology for people with sight loss to navigate train stations with greater ease.

The myEyes app uses near-field communication, the same technology that allows contactless payment by mobile phone, to provide audio directions.

These guide customers from the station entrance to our Assisted Boarding Points on platforms. Here our team offers help to board the train with as little as 10 minutes notice.

The service is in place at Vauxhall and Putney, with a view to extending it to other stations.







**Better for  
our people**

**Next step: achieve a gold standard  
for all of our apprenticeships  
through the Investors in People  
accreditation scheme**



# Better for our people

Unleashing opportunity and nurturing wellbeing

Making sure our workplace environment is inclusive and supportive will help a wider range of people to develop their potential and realise a shared sense of purpose.

## Upskill talent

**Goal:** By 2025 and beyond, our entire apprenticeship programme will achieve Gold standard in the Investors in People 'We Invest in Apprentices' accreditation

## Deliver inclusivity

**Goal:** We will publish and action our long-term diversity, equality and inclusion strategy and roadmap

## Look out for each other

**Goal:** We will ensure all our colleagues feel safe and easily able to access therapeutic support for challenges affecting physical, emotional or mental wellbeing



## Upskill talent

### Why it matters to us

Our people are the heartbeat of our business. By investing in our people we can make a positive social impact, on them personally and as local residents and the wider communities we serve.

Inspiring and developing our people means they will want to stay with us for longer, benefiting us with their skills and experience. To do this, we recognise the need to offer greater learning opportunities at all levels. It means making these opportunities open and transparent so it is clear how anyone can progress and move on in the business.

### Case study

#### Primed for success

Ask Rhianna Burgis about her job and she paints a positive picture of what it's like to be the only female paint sprayer – for now! – at our Bournemouth traincare depot.

Her advice to women considering joining this traditionally male-dominated field is, “Not to worry. Your colleagues will look after you, as everyone wants you to succeed.”

Rhianna will soon complete her apprenticeship to be a qualified Body and Paint Operative. As a newcomer, she's found the working atmosphere to be very supportive.

In turn, she is hoping to encourage more women into the profession, as well as other related areas. We recently ran an awareness-raising tour at our Wimbledon depot to showcase the variety of roles and opportunities for women in engineering.

### Our plans

#### Create more apprenticeships

We will create more high-quality and diverse apprenticeship positions, aiming to have no less than 2.5% of our workforce starting an apprenticeship with us each year from 2022/23

#### Increase training quality for apprentices

By 2025 and beyond, our entire apprenticeship programme will achieve Gold standard in the Investors in People ‘We Invest in Apprentices’ accreditation





### Adding more apprenticeships

We employ more than 5,000 employees. That's a lot of talent and a lot of opportunities to fill.

Our apprenticeships are a very good place to start your career because they are real jobs, with real prospects.

Since 2017 we have enrolled 530 apprentices, with 44 starting in the past six months alone. The roles are as varied as our new recruits: from engineering and customer service, to supply chain and business administration. Plus, we offer new young talent apprenticeships for 16 to 17 year olds – and we're looking to diversify further.

Our apprentices get the opportunity to learn skills on the job, gain nationally-recognised qualifications and earn a salary. We benefit from a constant talent pool of enthusiastic individuals who can realise their potential as valuable team members.

We want to grow these opportunities by offering more apprenticeship programmes, both for new entrants and for existing colleagues to upskill. From now, we aim to have five in every 200 employees (2.5% of the workforce) starting an apprenticeship with us each year.



### Quality as well as quantity

The best apprenticeships don't happen by accident. It's about attracting that person, providing space and support for them to grow. Then we're both unstoppable!

Our apprenticeships are geared to deliver long term benefits: for the apprentice, the team, the business and wider society.

A mentoring scheme supports our apprentices at every stage. The benefits of this were recognised in us being shortlisted for Best Apprenticeship Programme in the Investors in People Awards 2022.

We're already the first rail company to be awarded Investors in People's 'We Invest in Apprentices' accreditation. Our aim is to continue on this track to achieve and maintain the Gold standard in this leading accreditation, not just for individual courses but our whole apprenticeship programme.

## Deliver inclusivity

### Why it matters to us

A diverse workforce positively enriches business performance at all levels. We serve a diverse region, and we want our workforce to reflect this: not just by gender or culture but by background, skills, beliefs and more.

But sustainable progress in diversity and representation requires inclusion – the degree to which our employees are embraced, supported, and enabled to make meaningful contributions. That's why we will take action to create a long-lasting inclusive culture, where our diverse workforce can flourish.

### Our plans

#### Champion inclusivity

We will use our new diversity, equality and inclusion strategy and roadmap to instil behaviours in building a more diverse and inclusive workplace, that better reflects the communities we serve

#### Upskill our people

By the end of 2024, all of our people will have completed best practice inclusion training



#### Case study

#### Smart moves for women who can

To mark International Women's Day, colleagues from across our operating group met to reflect the progress made in tackling barriers and supporting more women into senior roles in our business.

The women are participants in Step Forward, our programme helping female managers to prepare for more senior leadership roles. Since its launch in 2020, 45% of participants have secured promotions.

A similar programme, Step Up, supports women seeking their first line management position. More than 180 women have taken part and over a quarter have already been promoted into higher paid roles.

### Equipped to welcome and include

Talent and diversity is valued in our workforce and we know we can do more to widen the diversity of our employee population. We're building a stronger workplace community that is accessible and welcoming to everyone.

This means us taking actions such as targeting our recruitment at under-represented groups and ensuring all of our colleagues take part in inclusion training within the next two years.

We will publish our new diversity, equality and inclusion strategy and roadmap. It includes measuring our current position and what's needed to improve. Our progress is focused on achieving the Inclusive Employers Standard accreditation by the end of 2023.



### Inclusive beats exclusive

Inclusion involves adapting the work environment to make everyone feel welcome. It's a winning approach as by finding each individual's strengths, and intentionally planning for their success within the team, we prosper as a business too.

Some of the first steps we've made to reinforce inclusivity include:

- Introducing diversity and inclusion training for all managers, as well as unconscious bias training for all hiring managers
- Partnering with the Spark! CONNECT mentoring scheme to enable our female colleagues to mentor local young women from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Setting up a leadership development programme for colleagues from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background
- Continuing the partnership with The Prince's Trust to offer employment pathways for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds

#### Case study

#### On track to overcome barriers

Young people in Southampton are receiving personal and professional mentoring and advice from elite and ex-Paralympic athletes.

The 'Get on Track' scheme is designed to help teenagers from all backgrounds facing disadvantages in their lives to develop new skills to prepare them for employment.

The inspiring programme focuses on building 'work ready' capabilities such as confidence, self-esteem and resilience. Peer-led community activities take participants out of their comfort zone and experiencing something new.

It's made possible by us working in partnership with The Dame Kelly Holmes Trust and Woodlands Community College in Harefield.



## Look out for each other

### Why it matters to us

With great people comes great responsibility. If we don't look after our people, we will never progress and succeed as a sustainable business. For us, the link between a healthy workforce and sustainability is clear. Good workplace performance, greater productivity and improved loyalty are just some of the enduring benefits which follow from putting the safety and wellbeing of our employees first.

### Our plans

#### **Offer personal wellbeing support**

We will ensure all our colleagues can easily access therapeutic support for challenges affecting their physical, emotional or mental wellbeing

#### **Provide regular safety training**

We will enable every manager to maintain our high standards of health and safety through our Be Safe training programme, with a refresher every two years

#### **Renew our commitment to safety**

We will reinforce and strengthen our health and safety strategy so that both colleagues and customers will feel safe and supported when they are with us



### Case study

#### **Moved to get moving**

We raced into 2022 by helping our colleagues to get moving through participation in the Million Metre Challenge. This was a team challenge to increase daily physical activity to improve personal health, along with mental strength and self-discipline too.

Run in partnership with the social enterprise which has a mission to improve the long-term wellbeing of a million people, it proved a simple way to have a powerful and enduring impact.

The challenge's friendly team competition and motivation was enjoyed by 236 employees taking part. Over 30 days they recorded 5,300 hours of moving time involving over 9,000 activities, with walking, cycling and running being the most popular.

Almost two-thirds of participants said it gave them more energy throughout the day and over 90% said the event had motivated them to do more exercise. "It gave me the chance to get the best out of myself and do more," was one typical comment in the feedback.

## People at the heart of safety

Safety is the golden thread running through all we do.

It makes us a more sustainable and resilient company, guarding from hazards and ensuring the wellbeing of our employees, customers and local environment.

It is the responsibility of every team member, no matter what their role. By looking after our safety, we help protect our communities and make sure everyone goes home safely every day.

Our health and safety strategy has five key principles to guide and help us to improve:

**Safety first** – Doing the basics right

**Evidence** – Analysing data to target interventions

**Leading** – Demonstrating visible leadership

**Empowering** – Engaging and communicating

**Looking** – after our people and beyond the pandemic



## Taking good care with wellbeing

Over the past two years 200 colleagues have trained as mental health first aiders. A quarter are managers with responsibility within their role to raise awareness and promote discussion of mental health and wellbeing at all levels.

Mental Health Awareness Week was an opportunity for colleagues to link up for events with local groups including mental health charity Mind. Colleagues enjoyed singing sessions that helped them tune into the wellbeing benefits of music.

Businesses perform better when employees are healthy, motivated and focused. We will continue to take stock of our workforce's wellbeing and make sure we prioritise employee engagement.

We offer an open and supportive workplace, providing all of our colleagues with easy access to high quality tools, advice and welfare programmes to help with physical or mental health challenges.





## ○ Our foundations





# A strategy grounded in sound environmental management

**Planet, Places, People: these are the overarching themes of our sustainability strategy guiding our journey to a better future.**

Underpinning it all is sound environmental management. This remains at the core of everything we do. It ranges from achieving high standards under environmental certifications to how we procure materials and report our performance. Key action plans are in place to mitigate environmental risks and push forward with innovation plans.

International standards

Water management

Climate change adaptation

Sustainable sourcing

Sustainability reporting

Embedding sustainability

Training

## International standards

**Why it matters:** We need to get the basics right: understanding and managing our risks effectively. Our key environmental risks include nuisance management, especially noise, and avoiding incidents such as fuel and chemical spillages.

**What we're doing:** We use various international standards to ensure our sustainability efforts meet quality and compliance requirements. These include:

- ISO 14001:2015 for environmental management
- ISO 50001:2018 for energy management
- ISO 20400:2017 for sustainable procurement
- ISO 45001:2018 for health and safety management
- ISO 55000:2014 for asset management

## Water management

**Why it matters:** Water scarcity continues to be an issue, especially in south-east England. We use a lot, from washing our trains to customer use at our stations.

**What we're doing:** We can't manage what we can't measure, so we've installed autometers across our estate. We've introduced new ways to reduce water use. For example, we've cut water use by 40% in the last year by fitting aerated sensor mixer taps to customer toilets at over 20 locations. We've also improved the specification of toilets to use less water.

## Climate change adaptation

**Why it matters:** Extreme weather and temperature changes have a big impact on whether we can run our services effectively. We want our railway to be resilient and prepared for the future so our services can run whatever the weather.

**What we're doing:** We're working closely with Network Rail and other train companies within our region to identify hotspots and come up with plans for future resilience.

## Sustainable sourcing

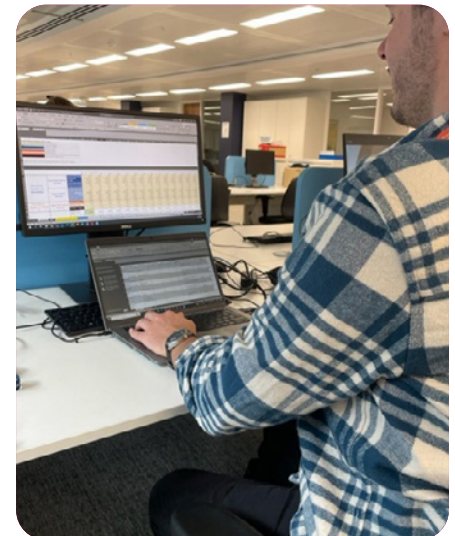
**Why it matters:** Where our products and materials come from, and how they are sourced, can have a big impact both environmentally and socially. This issue is reflected in our strategy's Planet pillar to close the loop for a circular economy and reduce carbon.

**What we're doing:** We've completed supplier heat maps and benchmarked ourselves against ISO 20400. Both of these exercises have enabled us to understand high risk products and countries. We're also embedding awareness of modern slavery and safeguarding into our training and contracts.

## Sustainability reporting

**Why it matters:** We want to be transparent and open in everything we do. This requires us to have key performance indicators to track, robust data to analyse for trends, and to monitor progress against this strategy.

**What we're doing:** We report on our performance every six months through our customer report. Overall performance will be provided in an annual update. This is assured by an independent specialist. We aspire to work with others to share best practice and help each other along the way to a one railway approach. You can find our latest report [here](#).



## Embedding sustainability

**Why it matters:** For true and lasting success we need sustainability to be deeply rooted throughout our business. Ultimate responsibility lies with our Managing Director. But it is the responsibility of every employee to own and deliver our journey to a better future.

**What we're doing:** We've established a governance process with action groups and high level performance reviews. Our business units are supported by our sustainability and governance teams to connect all the pillars within this strategy together.

## Training

**Why it matters:** We believe that everyone should be given the opportunity to learn and grow in their understanding of sustainability.

**What we're doing:** We've established both accredited and non-accredited training to support our drive for greater sustainability. This includes:

- A one-day course accredited by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) for introducing sustainability to all our colleagues
- Sustainability leadership training
- E-learning modules on sustainability issues at stations, depots and fleets, covering aspects such as modern slavery, safeguarding, accessibility and inclusion
- A wealth of development tools on our learning and development system, from mental health and emotional intelligence to presentation skills and dealing with conflict





## Case study

### EMS in action

Along with over 80 stations, our expansive network features depots, offices and construction sites. Inevitably they all have an impact on the environment; not just on the flora and fauna but our neighbours and wider local communities as well.

Being better for the environment is a core pillar of our sustainability strategy. We need to plan ahead to manage environmental risks, including pollution, waste and noise. We have a responsibility to carefully manage our impacts and strive for continuous improvement.

The Environment and Energy Management System (EMS) gives us practical processes for doing this and in a way that aligns with two international ISO standards: ISO14001:2015 for managing environmental impact and ISO5001:2018 for improving energy efficiency. The benefits we've had using EMS include:

- Ideas sharing
- A proactive approach which has improved responses to incidents
- Ownership and awareness at site level
- Online training modules for all employees to complete
- Better relationships with our stakeholders
- Better control and understanding of our impacts
- Improved records on performance and management



## IEMA

### Corporate partnerships

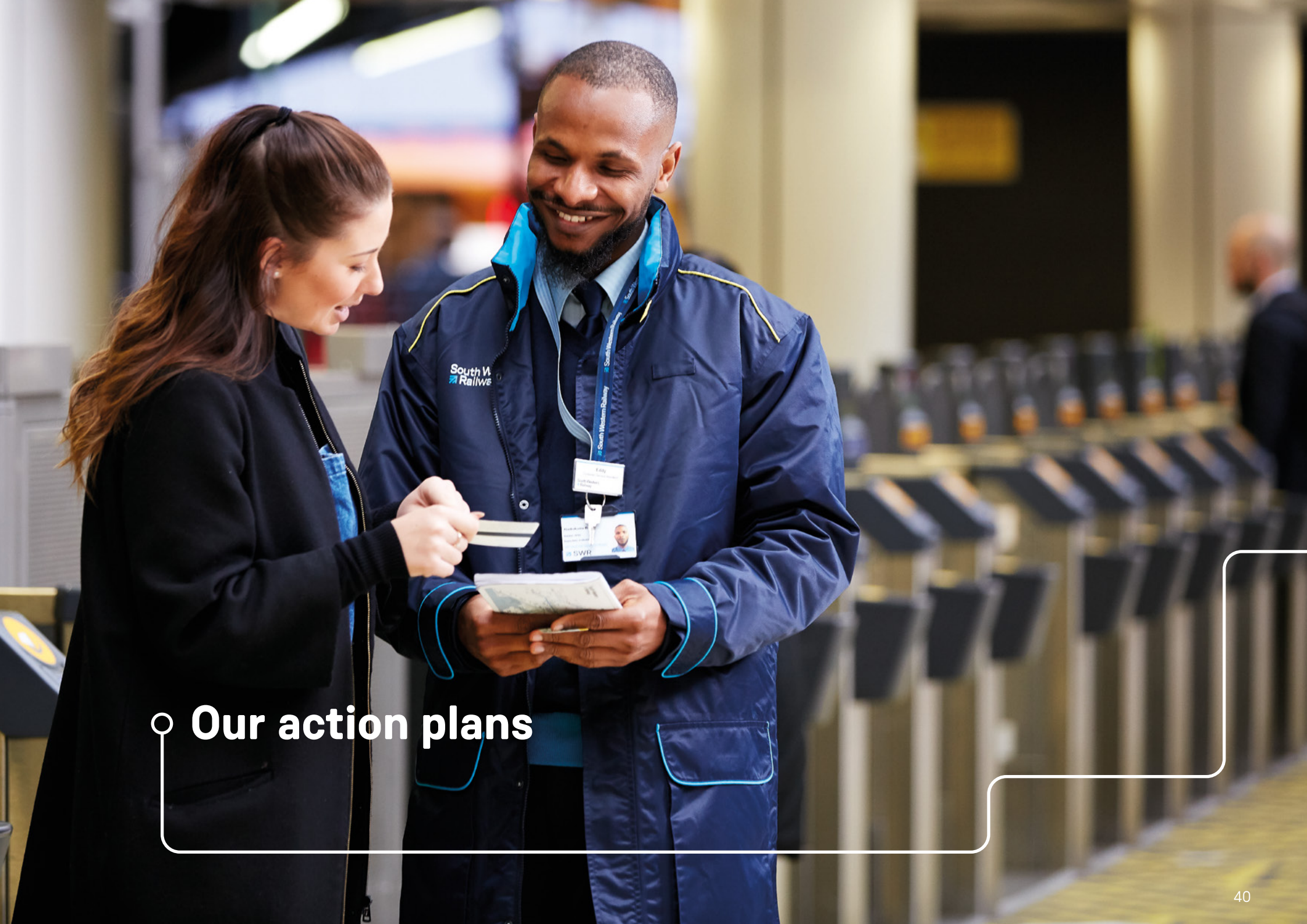
We're a corporate member of this worldwide alliance of environment and sustainability professionals. We have joined their mission to transform the world and deliver sustainability. We work with IEMA to help develop our workforce's productivity, resilience and growth against a backdrop of numerous sustainability and climate threats.



We work in partnership with RSPB to increase biodiversity at our stations and create hubs for wildlife. Through careful plant management, and taking steps such as putting up nest boxes and cutting holes in fences as 'hedgehog highways', our stations can act as refuges for wildlife in trouble.



To support the delivery of its community projects, we recently became a patron of Shaping Portsmouth. This community interest company creates sustainable collaborations and programmes to make Portsmouth a place to invest, live, learn, work and visit as Britain's premier waterfront city.



## Our action plans



# Better for our planet

Tackling climate change and protecting nature

Focus Area

Headline Goal

Specific Targets

## Bring emissions down

By 2040 at the latest, we will become net zero across our scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions

### Cut carbon

By 2040 we will achieve our net zero science-based target (SBTi) by reaching net zero across our scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions

### Encourage greener travel

By 2025 all of our stations will have facilities to support customers who want to 'model shift' by using lower carbon transport to and from our stations, such as travelling by bike instead of by car

### Understand air quality

We will develop a joint project with specialists to assess and improve air quality at our stations

## Waste not

By 2025 we will make sure that 85% of our waste is reused, recycled or composted

### Maintain landfill diversion

We will continue to divert 100% of our operational waste from landfill

### Improve waste recycling

By 2025, we will reuse, recycle or compost at least 85% of our waste. Any remaining waste will be used to generate energy

### Enable the circular economy

By 2026 100% of materials used through key contractual partnerships will meet our circular procurement standard

## Bloom beautifully

By 2030 we will achieve net positive impact on biodiversity across our stations and depots

### Encourage nature at stations and depots

By 2024 we will have a biodiversity action plan in place for 50 locations and with improvement programmes already underway in half of them

### Deliver community gardens

By 2024, we will jointly create at least five community gardens in partnership with Network Rail

### Enhance trackside wildlife

We will create wildlife corridors through working with Network Rail

**Next stop: becoming net zero across our greenhouse gas emissions by 2040**





# Better for our places

Making our stations a local force for good

Focus Area

Headline Goal

Specific Targets

## Stations and spaces

Support Community Rail Partnerships and station adoption schemes across at least 75% of our network

**Support community partnerships**  
We will support and enhance at least 12 high-quality community rail partnerships plus at least 50 station adoption schemes

**Improve our stations**  
By 2025 we will set up 20 or more improvement schemes in collaboration with industry partners to improve the environmental impact and social value of our stations

**Make space available**  
By 2025 we will repurpose at least 11 station spaces so they're available for local community groups or charities to use

## Community support

Each year we will enrich the communities we serve through commercial and charitable support

**Understand our communities' needs**  
Each year we will complete a social value report to identify the benefits added through our work and where we can do better

**Maintain charity partnerships**  
We will support at least one charity partnership in each regional area and give these approved charity groups free access to our stations to promote their cause

**Boost local business use**  
We will make sure that our procurement processes allow small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to tender a quote for applicable work under £50,000

**Help safeguard people at risk**  
We will work collaboratively on projects to support people on our network in vulnerable situations including delivering actions of the Rough Sleeping on Rail Charter

## Easy access

By 2024 we will achieve the top accreditation under the government's Inclusive Transport Leaders Scheme to improve disabled people's access to the railway system

**Empower employees with disabilities**  
By 2023 we will achieve Level 3 in the Disability Confident Leader Programme to help us change attitudes for the better

**Improve station passenger access**  
By 2023 we will equip at least 70% of our stations to offer step-free access

**Listen and learn**  
We will strengthen our engagement with people with disabilities and other groups to improve what we offer and raise the 'disability confidence' level of our employees

**Support people with non-visible disabilities**  
We will trial the use of calm spaces at three or more of our stations to support and increase the confidence of customers with non-visible disabilities they use our services

**Next stop: support Community Rail Partnerships and station adoption schemes across at least 75% of our network**



# Better for our people

Unleashing opportunity and nurturing wellbeing

Focus Area

Headline Goal

Specific Targets

## Upskill talent

By 2025 and beyond, our entire apprenticeship programme will achieve Gold standard in the Investors in People 'We Invest in Apprentices' accreditation

**Create more apprenticeships**  
We will create more high-quality and diverse apprenticeship positions, aiming to have no less than 2.5% of our workforce starting an apprenticeship with us each year from 2022/23

**Increase training quality for apprentices**  
By 2025 and beyond, our entire apprenticeship programme will achieve Gold standard in the Investors in People 'We Invest in Apprentices' accreditation

## Deliver inclusivity

We will publish and action our long-term diversity, equality and inclusion strategy and roadmap

**Champion inclusivity**  
We will use our new diversity, equality and inclusion strategy and roadmap to instil behaviours in building a more diverse and inclusive workplace, that better reflects the communities we serve

**Upskill our people**  
By the end of 2024, all of our people will have completed best practice inclusion training

## Look out for each other

We will ensure all our colleagues feel safe and easily able to access therapeutic support for challenges affecting physical, emotional or mental wellbeing

**Offer personal wellbeing support**  
We will ensure all our colleagues can easily access therapeutic support for challenges affecting their physical, emotional or mental wellbeing

**Provide regular safety training**  
We will enable every manager to maintain our high standards of health and safety through our Be Safe training programme, with a refresher every two years

**Renew our commitment to safety**  
We will reinforce and strengthen our health and safety strategy so that both colleagues and customers will feel safe and supported when they are with us

**Next step: achieve a gold standard for all of our apprenticeships through the Investors in People accreditation scheme**

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**Journey to  
a Better Future**

**South Western  
↗ Railway**