Sustainability Report

We're using Our Responsible Plan to make a difference today and look after tomorrow.



Contents

01	A note from our Managing Director	03
02	Introduction	05
03	Our Responsible Plan	09
04	Our Planet	11
05	Our People	16
06	Our Customers	21
07	Our Communities	26
08	Looking Forward	32

A note from our Managing Director



A note from our Managing Director

We're here to connect people and places with opportunity. We'll do that whilst creating a railway which generates nationwide pride and prosperity, reconnecting the United Kingdom in the wake of Covid-19.

Our services will help with the recovery and the creation of strong, vibrant and sustainable local economies in a way that is safe, accessible, efficient and resilient.

Last year, we published our Sustainable Development Strategy called Our Responsible Plan. We believe that a successful business is a responsible one, and we're on a mission to make a difference today to look after tomorrow. There's a commitment from every single one of us at Avanti West Coast to deliver on this statement. We take responsibility for protecting our network and we're enhancing our services for this generation and future generations down the line.

Environmental challenges continue and, in some cases, have been exacerbated by the pandemic. That's why we are working hard to introduce our new bimode trains that will replace our dieselonly Voyagers; substantially reducing our carbon footprint and air quality-related emissions. Last year we conducted carbon neutral feasibility studies for all of our stations and will be looking to create a delivery plan to maximise energy efficiency and use of onsite renewable energy.

We're proud that the diversity of our people is reflective of the communities

we serve, but we know we can go further and target those areas of the business that need more diversification – for example, our driver population.

Our customers are our top priority and the ability to listen to our disabled customers, through dedicated accessibility panels, has allowed us to take steps to make it easier to travel with us. We have made booking assisted travel via Passenger Assist easier and have a programme of disability training for staff.

The people and places we serve are essential in achieving our vision of putting the railway at the heart of communities. We've built strong relationships with the Community Rail Network this past year, and although Covid curtailed some initiatives, we have funded some exciting community schemes that will be delivered in 2021. There is much more that we are looking at doing as a responsible business and I am excited at what we can achieve by making a difference today to look after tomorrow.



Introduction





Welcome to our 2021 Sustainability Report, which provides an overview of our initiatives and describes our key results in line with Our Responsible Plan.

Here, you can find out how we performed from April 2020 to March 2021 including the carbon emissions from our trains, the energy and water we use in our buildings and what we do with our waste. Plus, you'll learn how we support our local communities, our work with charities and our drive to promote equality.

Our world is constantly changing. But what remains constant are the environmental and social challenges that we all face. We're in this together, and some issues have been stressed even further during the pandemic. No matter what, we'll continue to provide a sustainable alternative to air travel and the use of private road vehicles.

Our Responsible Plan is made up of four strategic pillars which help guide sustainable development in our business and deliver our goals. It's built on the people and places where we have the opportunity to make most impact as a train company and allows us to focus our attention on doing what matters, not what's easy. It's there as a moral compass for all of our people, guiding every decision and a useful reminder that every one of us is responsible for sustainable development. This plan is all of ours and every one of us of us can make a difference today to look after tomorrow.

We're going to protect our planet with our people at its heart, by doing what's right for our customers and improving life in our communities.

Our Responsible Plan lays out our ambition for the next 10 years and has incorporated the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The 10-year timeframe has given us the opportunity to raise the bar and be big and bold with our approach which means we can take pride knowing that we're acting responsibly.

Our 129-strong senior leadership team all went through a full day's training course on what Our Responsible Plan is, why it is important, what the pillars are, what our goals are and plenty of discussion on what initiatives are needed for us to meet our goals.

We want everyone at Avanti West Coast to have the opportunity to get involved and share their spark to make our operation as sustainable as we can. We want to win together and have empowered our Green Champions, our Community Champions and our Accessibility Champions to create and deliver Local Station Sustainability Action Plans. We also have 4 inclusive internal networks that are designed to be a safe space where our colleagues can share individual stories about ethnicity and race, gender, LGBQT+ and disabilities in order to make positive changes that benefit us all.



We're going to protect our planet with our people at its heart, by doing what's right for our customers and improving life in our communities.

Our Responsible Plan



Our Responsible Plan

Our Responsible Plan is made up of four strategic pillars which help guide sustainable development in our business and deliver our goals. It's built on the people and places where we have the opportunity to make most impact as a train company, and allows us to focus our attention on doing what matters, not what's easy. It's there as a moral compass for all of our people, guiding every decision and a useful reminder that every one of us is responsible. This plan is all of ours and every one of us of us can make a difference.



To Protect Our Planet

We can make rail travel greener. All of it; not just A to B. We'll find innovative solutions for the big stuff, and simply better ways of doing the basics every day. We can and will leave a smaller footprint. That means tackling climate change head on. No more buy, use, throw; more reduce, reuse, recycle. By 2031, our business will be net zero carbon.



Doing What's Right For Our Customers

We'll raise the bar and deliver a more sustainable operation that works for all our customers. By reaching out, listening and acting on what our customers need, we can deliver better travel decisions. By 2031, we want everyone to experience integrated, independent and low carbon end-to-end journeys.



With Our People at its Heart

Let's listen, empower and inspire sparks to fly. By talking more, we can encourage each other to take action. We can develop our culture of diversity even further and attract the best talent from all walks of life. By 2031, all departments will be representative of society with zero pay gaps.



Improving Life in Our Communities

We can help make life fairer, safer and that bit better for our communities. The more people onboard, the more progress we can make to develop prosperity across our network. By 2031 we will have made a real difference to over 1m lives.

Our Planet



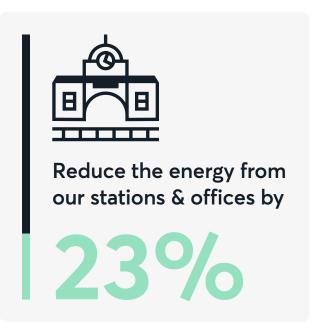
Our Planet



Over the course of 2020/21, we successfully gained certification of our Environmental Management System to both ISO 14001 and ISO 50001 the international standards for Environment and Energy. As part of this, we set annual environmental targets (published in our Environment and Energy Policy Statement) alongside interim 5-year targets on our pathway to our 2031 goal to become net zero carbon.

Our interim 2026 environmental targets are:







Our 2020/21 Performance

One of our 2020/21 targets was to improve our trains carbon efficiency by 3%; we achieved a 9% improvement. We continue to promote eco-driving techniques with our skilled drivers. With the railway less congested, due to the reduced service following the impact Covid-19, we were able to run smoother and more energy efficient services. Within our reduced service, we also prioritised the use of our electric fleet as they are more efficient than their diesel counterparts resulting in less carbon emissions. This coupled with the continual decarbonisation of the electricity grid made a large improvement in the carbon efficiency of our trains.

As we get underway with 2021/22, we are continuing with plans to introduce our new Hitachi fleet with the first due in service before the end of 2022. The new Hitachi fleet is made up of new electric trains and new bi-mode trains, which are both electric and diesel powered, and will replace our diesel-only Voyager fleet. The bi-mode trains will reduce our use of diesel by approximately 80% and will go a long way to help us achieve our 2026 target.

We had a 2020/21 target to reduce our energy consumption at stations and offices by 2%; we achieved an 11% reduction. Due to Covid-19, many of our station areas were closed such as waiting rooms and First Class Lounges with our colleagues remaining proactive in turning off lights in unoccupied rooms and escalators when footfall is low. Our station tenant offering has also been much reduced throughout the year, which has led to less energy consumption.



We installed a building management system (BMS) at all of our stations to improve our understanding of energy consumption, and alongside this have completed 16 carbon neutral studies across our station portfolio. We'll be using the **information from** both the BMS and the studies to create an energy efficiency strategy and an onsite renewable energy strategy. This will complement our existing plans to introduce more LED lighting and better boilers in the coming years. We're also excited to have been working with Network Rail to undertake a detailed feasibility design for a solar panel car port at Stokeon-Trent that could generate enough electricity to power the station and be used as a test case for further roll outs of the technology across the industry.

Our 2020/21 target was to reduce our stations and office water consumption by 2%; we achieved a 30% reduction. Due to Covid-19 and the large reduction of footfall at our stations, water consumption from our toilet facilities reduced dramatically. Water leaks have also been identified and fixed across our estate with the help of our smart water meters meaning we can identify and react much quicker than previously. Leaks were fixed at Rugby, Stafford and Macclesfield.

We took the opportunity during the quieter operations to trial water saving devices in the customer toilets at Crewe. This included low water flush and improvements to our taps including making them sensor operated which reduces customer contact points – a big win during a pandemic. Once we see how these new devices perform as customer numbers return, we will make a decision to roll these out across all our stations.

This year we achieved our zero waste to landfill target and improved our recycling rate from 33% to 53%, meeting our 50% recycling target. We ensured that all of the waste from our stations had pick-up routes that allowed our general waste to be taken for incineration with energy capture rather than sent to landfill. The recycling increase is due to the installation of new customer-facing recycling bins at all of our stations, and ensuring we do the basics right by having the correct waste stream segregation in our back of house waste compounds. We also worked closely with FareShare and Olio to donate surplus food from our onboard service.

Next year, we'll look to introduce waste segregation on our trains and ensure consistency of customer and colleague bins at our stations and offices. We'll be introducing coffee cup recycling as well as trialling a dedicated Recycling Officer role at Crewe.

We've installed diffusion tubes at all of our stations which enables us to monitor the air quality and identify any hot spots where we need to take action. Our Green Champions have been instrumental in this as they ensure the tubes are replaced every month and sent for analysis.

Speaking of our Green Champions, they've been busy this year. At Stafford, our Green Champions introduced even more waste segregation for colleagues to responsibly dispose of things like sweet wrappers, crisp wrappers, books and even used coffee pods. One of our onboard Green Champions has created a detailed carbon assessment of the food we sell on our trains and an onboard environment audit. One of our drivers who's a Green Champion has personally been recording his energy use per run and assessing ways of driving more efficiently, which has been shared with our Driver Management Team.

"I think our job is one of the greenest things going, you can get several hundred people on a train, so you just think how many cars that takes off the road. I think that everyone should care about sustainability, if you can demonstrate you're doing the sustainability and green stuff, people might follow"

Michael Knights

Green Champion & Driver

Our People



Our People



Outside the ongoing effects of the pandemic, our customers and colleagues have an expectation that inclusion and diversity is at the heart of what we do. We'll continue to remain respectfully curious about individuals and will create safe spaces to have open, sometimes challenging, conversations across the business on subjects that matter to us all. Our four internal networks will drive us forward and promote equality, discussing our annual pay gap reports and creating annual action plans to improve them:

Our ability network – We want to be an employer of choice for disabled people, that means going beyond just providing reasonable adjustments. Our ability network has been key in establishing Accessibility Champions at stations across our routes who have been trialling the new Passenger Assist app. The network has also been involved in developing our online disability awareness training which has been delivered to 1,569 colleagues to date.

Our gender network - We believe that everyone should have the same opportunities regardless of their gender. For International Women's Day, we hosted listening groups to understand the experiences of women at Avanti West Coast. These groups were supplemented by surveys to ensure wider engagement. Our gender network has also been working on our gender pay gap that has once again highlighted that a key reason for this gap is an over-representation of men in the driver grade. As such, a crossorganisational working group has been established to develop and implement initiatives to attract more women to apply to become drivers.

Our race and ethnicity network - We want to encourage open and honest conversations. As part of our commitment to Black History Month, we hosted an external speaker to talk about race awareness at work. We also held a Tea & Talk session, designed to understand and share the experiences of colleagues from different ethnic minorities in a welcoming space. This was so successful that we have continued to hold bi-monthly sessions which focus on different themes. These opportunities to talk and listen to each other have become progressively more popular and pave the way for a better culture for all our people.

Our LGBTQ+ network – This network will continue to look at ways of promoting LGBTQ+ acceptance and understanding. During the first lockdown, when some of the LGBTQ+ community felt more isolated than others, this network wanted to ensure people had others to talk to and hosted regular online socials.

After Covid-19 forced the cancellation of Pride events across the country, which we had planned to support, this brilliant group of individuals were instrumental in creating and launching Progress – otherwise known as the Pride Train. This fully wrapped Pendolino is dressed head to toe in the UK's largest progressive Pride flag, garnering global celebration. On 25 August 2020, the Pride Train embarked on its inaugural trip with the service staffed by a LGBTQ+ crew as a one-off to mark the occasion. Progress will continue to run all year round celebrating the diversity of the communities we serve sharing a message of inclusion and diversity at Avanti West Coast.

In July 2020, we launched our internal leadership mentoring scheme. This is open to everyone across the business, but has been targeted to members of under-represented groups through network meetings and direct contact. The mentoring training encourages both mentors and mentees to share their stories and frames of reference, enabling meaningful and inclusive conversations to take place. The matching process also allows for personal circumstances and aspirations to be taken into account to ensure the right relationship is developed.

We are continuing to improve our staff data so that we can fully understand the demographic make-up of our workforce. We know that recruitment is key to ensuring we have a fully representative work force and to safeguard that our standards are at the highest possible level, our Talent Team attended an inclusive recruitment session delivered by Edit Development. This resulted in online materials being created for hiring managers to better understand how to create an inclusive recruitment process, to recognise and address bias that might impact the process.

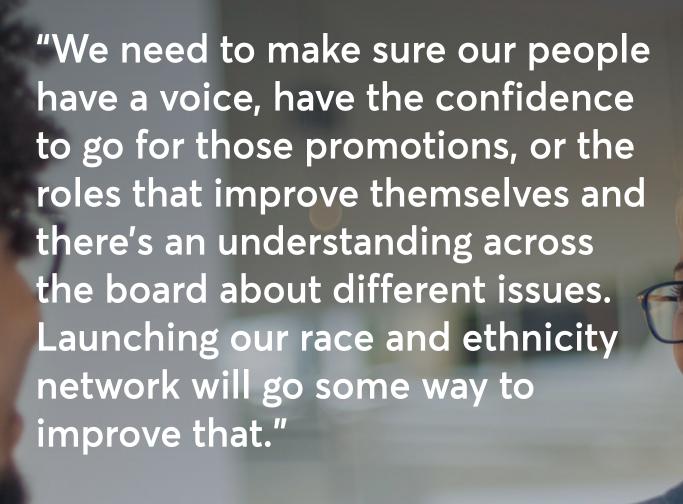




We have created an Inclusion Impact Assessment and briefed our Project Teams so that they understand the importance of the assessment and how to complete it. This is to ensure that we deliver positive inclusive impact at our stations and onboard our trains during change.

We'll look to obtain Investors in Diversity accreditation next year and incorporate inclusive thinking into our training programmes. This will include being responsive to the latest inclusive language and sharing it with our customer-facing colleagues to ensure we can deliver best practice in customer experience.

We will continue to keep talking and raise awareness across our business to understand what inclusion means for everyone whilst encouraging healthy conversations which stimulate progress.



Rob Singh

Head of News for Avanti West Coast

Our Customers



Our Customers



We play an important role in social mobility and driving down carbon from the transport sector. We want to develop stations so that the railway is accessible for everyone, enabling seamless door-to-door journeys and encouraging rail travel. To do this, we need to think differently. Positive change demands innovation and new ways of thinking, incorporating different perspectives and our customers' real-life experiences.

We hold quarterly Accessibility Panels alongside seven regional station accessibility panels to provide numerous opportunities for our disabled customers to discuss and evaluate new proposals, products and services. One that received a lot of support is the creation of a dedicated social media forum for disabled customers, which has since been launched.

Another of the most interesting presentations to our Accessibility Panel was around the Pendolino refurbishment project. The project is a major overhaul focusing on onboard facilities, with passengers benefitting from more comfortable seating, improvements to the shop, revamped toilets, better lighting, new interiors, and the installation of at-seat chargers with improved WiFi throughout. Specific accessibility improvements that came from consultation with the Accessibility Panel include:

- A contrasting wheelchair-space carpet with a wheelchair user symbol. A regular issue wheelchair users described was luggage left in the wheelchair space. The introduction of the contrasting flooring should help to ensure no luggage is left in this space.
- Passenger detection system indicating to staff if the wheelchair spaces have items in them, allowing them to ask customers to move any luggage into the appropriate spaces.
- Plugs onboard allowing the charging of powerchairs and scooters. They will also be oriented to allow easier use.
- Hinged tables in the wheelchair space will allow easier access for passengers using priority seating.
- Wireless mobile phone charging for wheelchair users via a cradle in the wheelchair space.

We've published our Accessible Transport Plan (ATP) which lays out how we assist customers with either a physical or non-visible disability. We've made changes to our offering by reducing the cut-off for customers to book Passenger Assist up to 6 hours on the day of booking. This has been improved from having to book by 10pm the night before travel.

We've carried out third party accessibility audits at all of our stations and will use our dedicated accessibility budget to continually improve our station accessibility. Projects that have been approved and will be delivered next year include more automatic doors at Stoke and Coventry, ramp resurfacing at Rugby, new escalator handrails at Birmingham International that have locator tactile dots for visually impaired customers and low-level mirrors in all of our lifts across our stations to allow safe wheelchair/scooter reversing.

We're also committed to helping customers with non-visible disabilities by promoting the use of the Sunflower lanyard and Just A Minute (JAM) card. These schemes allow customers to discreetly indicate they have a non-visible disability while travelling. Under these schemes, customers show a lanyard, wristband or wallet card with either the Sunflower logo or the JAM card logo to our staff which lets them know they may require some extra help, time or assistance whilst travelling with us. Our teams have all been briefed on the scheme and aware of how to help should a request come forward.





We have also agreed to trial Navilens at Crewe station next year. Navilens codes are similar to QR codes but can be picked up from the Navilens app up to 15m away. They will be placed around the station to enable visually impaired and blind customers to scan the codes, improving wayfinding around the station. If successful, Navilens could be rolled out across all our stations and onboard, supporting a full end-to-end experience and enabling independent travel.

Another initiative that was well received by our Accessibility Panel is the opportunity to order food and drink remotely onboard. That's why last year we trialled the At-Seat Order service onboard. Whilst customers in First have always enjoyed being served at their seat, trials took place on selected trains which enabled customers in Standard to order food and drink using their mobile phone, tablet or laptop with a choice of collection or delivery. The trials were very successful and this service has since been rolled out across all our Pendolino trains, with delivery only on our Voyager fleet.

We're planning to carry out some research into the ideal accessibility customer experience to ascertain invaluable information about how we can provide integrated and independent services for all our customers.

When it's safe to do so, we'll encourage more people to use trains and help reduce the use of private vehicles. We will create integrated transport plans for each of our stations and work with the people and local businesses to ensure stations are at the heart of community. We will review the end-to-end journey and increase capacity for cycle parking, install electric vehicle charging points and improve wayfinding to and from our stations.



Our Communities



Our Communities



The people and places we serve are essential to achieve our vision of putting railways back at the heart of community. We have spent 2020/21 building strong relationships with the 21 Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) who are dedicated to supporting community-based groups and partnerships that connect their community with the railway and deliver social benefit.

This year we also hosted our first ever Community Rail Conference, bringing together key stakeholders that connect across the West Coast Main Line in England, Scotland and Wales. The virtual conference was held as part of our commitment to the Community Rail Network where we shared our vision, which includes establishing a dynamic pipeline of volunteers and initiatives that help serve the needs of local communities. We are backing this vision up by investing in CRPs through the provision of annual core funding and launching two dedicated community funds that the CRPs can bid for to finance their projects. Two of the successfully delivered projects were:

Coventry Acts of Kindness

This three day event was organised by the Heart of England Community Rail Partnership & greeted customers at Coventry, Tile Hill and Canley – treating them with goodies when they arrived at the station. As well as the fun element, members of The Kaleidoscope Plus Group, one of the Midlands' leading mental health & wellbeing charities, were on hand to talk to people with any concerns and signpost them to some of the support services available for mental health and wellbeing, as well as services for those who have been affected by Covid-19. The gifts were all sourced from local businesses & included:

- Cookies from Wicked Cookies
- Art postcards from Brink Contemporary Art
- Flowers from Crescent Florist
- Cakes & brownies from Buttercream Dreams



"The response to Coventry Acts of Kindness was incredible, with people thanking our volunteers for their efforts and for the time they gave to listening to people. We had stories of our acts of kindness encouraging others to perform their own acts of kindness for thei friends and family, and we were able to bring a smile to a lot of people's faces. Not only that, but it was great to work with and get the support from The Kaleidoscope Plus Group, Avanti West Coast, West Midlands Railway, British Transport Police, Warwickshire County Council and the Leofric Lions."

Julia Singleton-Tasker
Community Rail Partnership Officer
Heart of England CRP

Ribblehead Google Expedition

The Settle Carlisle CRP and Settle Stories presented a virtual 360 tour of Ribblehead Viaduct. This initiative allows you to experience the magic of the tour on any desktop or mobile device, Google Expeditions app and for those who have access – Google Cardboard VR glasses viewer. The initiative included a history lesson for children using virtual reality glasses, increasing engagement and excitement from the children. The Google Expedition creates interest for both the community and people visiting on the rail network. It's available anywhere in the world, on any device, creating intrigue to this world famous landmark.

Other CRP projects that have been financially supported from our community funds, but not yet delivered, include:

- The redevelopment of Haltwhistle Waiting Room
- The creation of a community hub at Llandudno and an activity centre at Newtown
- Art-based projects at Wigan, Hamilton and Birmingham International stations
- A wildflower meadow in Wigan and a community garden project in Crewe



We support charities and local community organisations with the help of our Community Champions who act as ambassadors for Avanti West Coast. Our Community Champions work with their Station Manager and the local community to get involved in events, providing support where it's needed most, and help keep our customers and colleagues up to date with the most recent activity through station community boards and online social groups. Our Community Champions have supported local charities, groups and not-for-profit organisations to carry out various awareness and fundraising activities at their stations. Through these numerous fundraising initiatives, we raised £25,868 for our charity partner Action for Children.

Our people took the opportunity to pitch in where they could during Covid. This included one of our Train Managers dusting off their seamstress skills and creating over 1,000 accessories and nearly 50 scrubs for NHS staff in Lancashire. Two Customer Service Assistants, a Train Manager and a HR Business Partner were released from their day jobs to become British Transport Police and Met Police specials, helping to protect and support local communities. Our team at Carlisle held a collection and clubbed together with local businesses to provide hundreds of essential items and gifts to care homes in the local area. This community spirit travelled across our stations with teams at Glasgow, Birmingham, Coventry and Rugby donating toiletries, food, essential items and chocolate for local hospital staff and patients. Our team at Preston delivered 110 biryanis and 50 pizzas to the Royal Preston Hospital.

This dedication continued into Christmas, with hampers created by our station teams to help local foodbanks and vulnerable members of the community that they serve. Inspired by our selfless staff, we partnered with Olio and Fareshare to donate our surplus First Cass Lounge and onboard food (40 tonnes, worth around £93,000) to help our local communities and reduce our environmental impact. Although the minimum amount of food is ordered for customers' needs, the changing travel patterns and lockdowns left us with extra for a period of time.





We were also delighted that all the hard work at Penrith station did not go unnoticed as it was named Medium Station of the Year at the National Rail Awards 2020. Penrith was recognised for its customer-friendly presentation in the Station of the Year category, with judges commenting that Penrith 'has it all' and praised the work of the Avanti West Coast team as community ambassadors. Each week the team are visited by Penrith Community Gardeners, who maintain the colourful garden on platform 2. A charity bookshelf in the main waiting room encourages people using the station to take a book in return for a donation that supports local causes.

Another great initiative from our Community Champions was to give abandoned bikes at Crewe station a new lease of life as we partnered with a local not-for-profit business Community Recycle Cycles. The bike shop enlists volunteers to repurpose the unwanted bicycles to be sold in the community. With unwanted cycles taking up space in the bike racks, and many of them in good condition, we were keen to dispose of them responsibly, making sure they could be utilised by the community.

Going forward into next year we're committed to making our stations community assets and hot spots of commercial activity to drive socio-economic regeneration and to create business opportunity. We'll identify and invest in station spaces suitable for community use and promote our pop-up retail offering at stations.

We're also looking forward to launching our Avanti School Programme in 2021. This year we got a taste for what we could achieve when we worked with Network Rail as part of their Ready 4 Rail virtual work-experience programme to provide students from Warrington an understanding of the different jobs available at Avanti West Coast. Next year, we want to ensure we use our platform right across the West Coast Main Line to promote careers in the rail industry, how to be safe near the railway and help with social mobility. We will use this programme to promote all forms of inclusion which inspires young girls, different ethnicities, and those with disadvantaged backgrounds to continue study and join the railway family.

Looking Forward



Looking Forward

We're all in this together. Big or small, every single one of us can make a difference. We're working hard to ensure that every team, colleague and partner representing Avanti West Coast understands Our Responsible Plan with a real sense of ownership inspired and empowered to make responsible business decisions. Next year, we'll carry out a 12-month internal campaign designed to include everyone at every level, encouraging feedback and ideas on what we can do as individuals, and as a business, to meet our four ambitious sustainable development goals.

Together, we will make a difference today to look after tomorrow.







Sustainability Report | June 2021 Sustainability means the world to us.