

Our Responsible Plan

How we'll deliver sustainable development
and look after tomorrow together.

Sustainability means the world to us.

AVANTI
WEST COAST



Contents

01	Who we are and what we're all about	03
02	Our Responsible Plan at a glance	06
03	What is sustainable development?	11
04	A decade down the line	14
05	This is how we do it	18
06	Along the way	35
07	The wheels are in motion	41
08	References	44

Who we are
and what
we're all about

01

Who are Avanti West Coast?

We're a train operator and we run services on the West Coast Main Line. The West Coast Main Line is Britain's number one long-distance railway. We're proud to serve millions of customers and hundreds of communities by running trains between London, the West Midlands, the North West of England, North Wales and Scotland.

Avanti West Coast make up one half of the West Coast Partnership which is owned by First Trenitalia – a joint venture between FirstGroup and Trenitalia. Our partnership also works with High Speed 2 Ltd (HS2) and the Department for Transport (DfT) bringing to life a whole new chapter for rail travel.



What we're all about

For us, getting people from A to B is just one part of the picture. We do more than take people to places; we connect them with opportunity. When we take people to their jobs, get great minds to universities or bring families to the beach we're doing more than just transport – we're opening up what's possible.

People and places mean everything to us. They're our colleagues, customers, communities and the regions that we serve. We're proud to connect with people from every corner of our network and we're committed to sustainable growth and development for locations up and down the West Coast Main Line.

Together, we collaborate with our employees and across our industry – taking ownership for progressing shared priorities that help minimise our environmental impact and generate social and economic growth.

This is our chapter. And we're here to make a difference today to look after tomorrow.



Our
Responsible
Plan at a
glance

02

**Big or small,
every single day,
every one of us is
responsible and
we can all make
a difference
today to look
after tomorrow.**

Why Our Responsible Plan matters

We believe a successful business is a responsible one, and we're on a mission to make a difference today to look after tomorrow. We're all committed to this statement. We take responsibility for protecting our network and we're enhancing our services for this generation and future generations down the line.

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 2020.

Our services help to build strong, vibrant and sustainable local economies. We'll deliver our goals safely making sure we are accessible, efficient and resilient. We will provide a sustainable alternative to air travel and the use of private vehicles.

To achieve our goals, we've outlined a 10-year sustainable development strategy. It's called Our Responsible Plan. We can only achieve our ambitious goals by working in collaboration with the rest of our industry, our colleagues, our customers, our governments, our councils and our communities. Working in partnership, we will deliver improvements across our route. Big or small – we're all responsible – and we can all make a difference today to look after tomorrow.

Our Responsible Plan at a glance

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 everyday basics. 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 colleagues. 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.**



and 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.**

Why have a plan at all?

Our 10-year strategy helps us to deliver our mission statement, which is: Make a difference today to look after tomorrow.

It relies on a commitment from each of us at Avanti West Coast to challenge the norm, push for progress, ask questions and think differently.

Our Responsible Plan is the framework for how we will deliver a sustainable development programme. It outlines what we want to achieve and maps out how we'll achieve it. Our plan is a plan for everyone, and all of us at Avanti West Coast are responsible.



What is sustainable development?

03

Sustainability means the world to us

There are lots of sustainable development frameworks that we loved reading when creating Our Responsible Plan. None that we've consulted whilst creating more so than the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) 10 Rail Sustainable Development Principles and the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Measuring success

We are keen to ensure that Our Responsible Plan is aligned with the rail industry's approach to sustainability. At the time of writing, we have followed the 10 RSSB Rail Sustainable Development Principles which clearly outlines what sustainability means for a rail company in the UK. However, there is a review taking place and a new Sustainable Rail Strategy (SRS) is being written to compliment the Whole Industry Strategy Programme (WISP). We are part of the SRS steering Group and will make sure we reflect any industry changes as we evolve Our Responsible Plan.



For each of the 10 principles, there are five levels of achievement:

- At risk
- Beginner
- Performer
- Leader
- Pioneer

Until the outcomes of the new Sustainable Rail Strategy are finalised and published, we will complete our self-assessment using these 10 principles and measure success using the five levels of achievement. By March 2022, we'll meet Performer status for all 10 principles, and by 2025 we aim to progress to Pioneer. It's important to be clear and transparent, so we'll also have our self-assessments independently audited. These commitments may alter to reflect and ensure alignment with the new industry approach to sustainability when it's published.

Global goals

The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals provide a shared blueprint to make the world a better place for everyone. As a train operating company, we have the ability to make a bigger impact in some areas more than others, but it's important that we consider all 17 goals. Each goal offers a clear direction and Our Responsible Plan takes into consideration the entire scope of sustainable development. Therefore, each of these goals are represented in our actions.



A decade
down the line

04

Our 10-year goals:

By 2031, our business will be net zero carbon.

By 2031, all departments will be representative of society with zero pay gaps.

By 2031, we want everyone to experience integrated, independent and low carbon end-to-end journeys.

By 2031, we will have made a real difference to over one million lives.

Where we want to be in 10 years

Our Responsible Plan is a 10-year strategy and has been produced in consultation with our industry partners, the DfT, Network Rail, the RSSB and the Rail Delivery Group. We have received valuable insights from our customers, our people and companies in our supply chain.

Insights

Our customers wanted us to focus on the more environmental side of sustainability by sourcing responsibly, reducing waste and combating climate change. On the other hand, our workforce wanted a focus on the more social side of sustainability with inclusion and diversity, alongside children and families as the main areas of focus. Both our customers and our people wanted to help improve health and wellbeing as well as poverty.

The feedback from our industry partners highlighted the wide range of topics that we need to tackle if we are to be leaders in sustainability. These included the more obvious ones such as climate change, air quality and social value. However, there was also a strong indication to move forward with other areas such as transport integration, connectivity, community cohesion, as well as gender and ethnic diversity.

These insights highlight that if we really want to show leadership, we must consider all impacts of sustainability. In other words – the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We have listened to the insights and developed Our Responsible Plan, guided by four strategic pillars to deliver progress over 10 years. By using all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, we'll endeavour to make progress wherever we can affect change with our colleagues and industry partners. We don't claim to have all of the answers, but our strategy will go a long way in making a difference today to look after tomorrow.

An aerial photograph of a beach. The top left corner shows the dark blue ocean with white foam from waves crashing onto the shore. The rest of the image is a wide expanse of golden-brown sand, covered with numerous small, dark footprints. The text is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

**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.**

**This is how
we do it**

05

Our planet



Sustainability means the world to us. That's why we're doing more to protect our planet.

Taking action

Climate change is the biggest threat to our long-term way of life and we'll ensure we do everything we can to help the UK transport industry decarbonise.

We know that this is a global issue for the sake of our planet. Climate change impacts our network directly with increasing extreme weather events that lead to increased rainfall, flooding tracks and stations, high winds and extreme temperatures which puts overhead equipment at risk of sagging and tracks buckling.

Aiming for net zero carbon by 2031 is the first step on our path to absolute zero carbon by 2050, in line with the UK Government's target. Our goal is to decarbonise as fast as possible, but we are mindful that this will take time, and even with a ten-year strategy, we will likely include some form of carbon off-setting to achieve net zero – albeit as a last resort.

Our Avanti Environment Council is committed to using Our Responsible Plan to reduce our carbon impact. We will create a full carbon footprint in line with science-based target methodology. This includes the energy from our trains and stations as well as from other activities such as our supply chain. To ensure accuracy, we will audit our footprint against ISO 14064 – the international standard for greenhouse gas validation and verification.

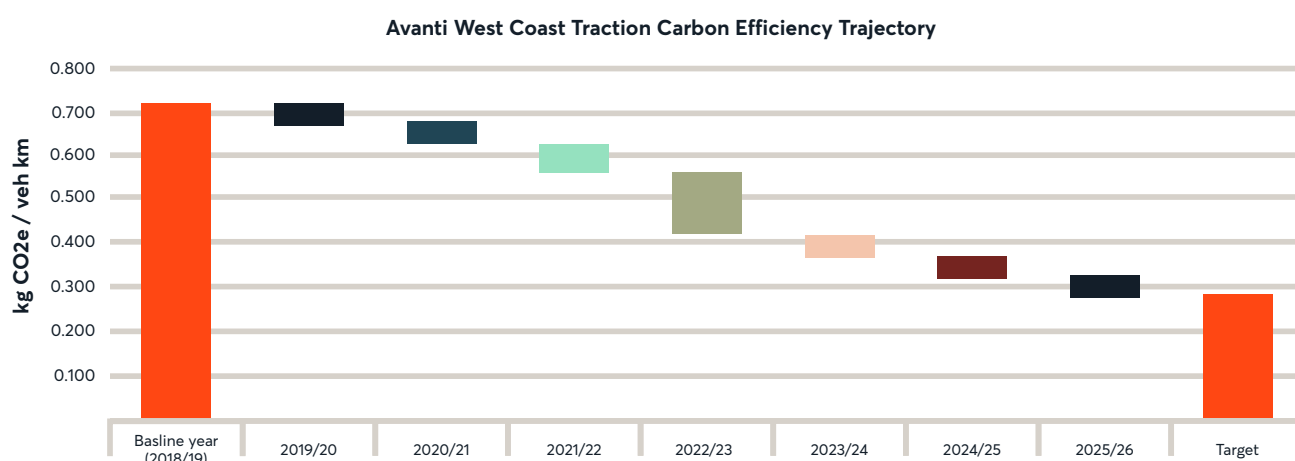
Once we have our full carbon footprint verified, we will work in conjunction with the DfT, Network Rail and other industry partners to build our roadmap to net zero carbon with exciting programmes and milestones along the way. We will continue to actively support the RSSB led DECARB Programme to ensure we are aligned with the wider rail industry's decarbonisation strategy.

Reducing carbon on the train

Our trains are already a low carbon form of transport, but we'll drive this down even further by reducing the carbon we use running trains and improving energy efficiency at stations. We already have certification to ISO 50001 – the international standard for energy management – but we know we need to do more. So we'll force carbon out of our business with the urgency that the climate crisis demands.

We're replacing our 20 diesel Voyager trains with a combination of 10 new electric trains and 13 new diesel/electric bi-mode trains, which only use diesel when lines are not electrified. We support the UK Rail Air Quality Strategic Framework and by dramatically reducing our diesel consumption, we not only reduce the carbon emissions we emit, we will also reduce local air quality pollutants. We'll minimise the energy used running our trains by ongoing research into engineering modification. Our train drivers are some of the best in the business and already trained in energy efficient driving styles. However, we'll continue to invest in the installation of a driver advisory system and enhance our eco-driving programme.

We're going to carry out a study into alternative energy which investigates other energy sources for our bi-mode trains, with the aim of eliminating diesel completely. We'll also work with the wider rail industry and Network Rail to implement the Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy. Whilst we work towards our net zero carbon goal, we've set an interim target to improve the carbon efficiency of our trains 61% by 2026 using the trajectory set out below.



Reducing carbon off the train

Running trains is clearly the most significant energy usage we have, however there's much more we can do to reduce energy at our stations. We've already started working on our ambition to have zero carbon stations by carrying out carbon neutral feasibility surveys at all stations that we manage. This allows us to understand how we can make them more energy efficient, whilst looking at generating renewable energy with our industry partners.

As with our trains, we've set an interim target, for our stations to reduce our absolute energy consumption 23% by 2026. To do this we'll install building management systems at our stations, which will provide smart controls for lighting (eventually fully LED) and heating which will be upgraded. We'll commit to an annual energy fund to provide resources which make efficiencies and invest in technology as it becomes available. There'll be some radical enhancements at our stations to improve the customer experience, which will undoubtedly increase energy consumption.

Therefore, an energy assessment will take place for all projects and any increase in energy will be off-set with investment in energy reduction initiatives.

Reducing carbon is the responsibility of everyone. So we're working with our supply chain to reduce our scope 3 carbon emissions which includes reviewing our rail replacement services and taxi usage as well as where the materials that we buy come from. We will also investigate the potential for our customers to off-set their travel through reforestation in the UK.

Understanding the risks and opportunities of climate change is a key part of managing the impact, this includes adapting where required. That's why we will work with Network Rail, in line with their Environmental Sustainability Strategy, to improve the resilience of our network and adapt our stations for the effects of global warming.

Waste management

It takes lots of resource to run a railway, and not just energy. Materials such as paper, packaging, food and drink, and metals and composites which maintain our trains and the railway infrastructure.

We need to stop using the term waste in favour of resources. This will help change the way we think about materials as we aim to reduce, reuse and recycle; easing pressure on the environment, natural resources and having a positive economic effect so that investment can be made where it's needed most.

To look at waste as a resource is the first step for us to reduce what we produce. To start with, we'll aim for the resource that everyone uses every day – paper. We're actively promoting digital tickets to all our customers and reducing the excess paper used as part of ticket distribution. Internally, we're discouraging unnecessary printing and looking at how we operate without paper where possible. Of course, sometimes using paper is unavoidable. But, by making significant changes to our office culture, we know that there's plenty we can do to minimise it.

We're proud of our food and drink offering for customers, but it uses lots of resource made by different manufacturers. That's why we've already worked with our catering suppliers and baselined what percentage of our food and drink packaging can be recycled. It currently stands at 85%. We'll continue to work on reducing packaging that can't be recycled without any detrimental impact on the quality of our products. We want to maximise recyclability through the way products are manufactured, the type of materials used and how we use that product on our trains.

Through working closely with our wasted resource contractors, we are currently sending zero station resources to landfill. Next, we want to improve the recycling rates at our 16 stations with the aim of reducing, reusing or recycling 90% of our wasted resource. We're planning to separate wasted resources at our stations in order to maximise the natural value of materials and feed it into different recycling processes. We'll achieve this with a combination of improved recycling bins at our stations for both customers and colleagues. We're also introducing coffee cup recycling points, improving our food recycling, and looking into the introduction of Recycling Officers at our stations. We'll work collaboratively with our tenants and our wasted resource contractors to ensure that any wasted resource goes to the best possible location for reuse or recycling.

A complete review of wasted resource management onboard our trains will be carried out. This will include recycling bins where possible and investigate the possibility of dedicated recycling trolleys. We will also work with Network Rail to ensure the wasted resource that comes off our trains at their managed stations is reused or recycled, too.



An aerial photograph of a dense forest of evergreen trees, likely spruce or fir, with a rich green color palette. The trees are packed closely together, creating a textured, layered appearance. The lighting is soft, highlighting the individual branches and needles.

Our goal:

**By 2031, our
business will be
net zero carbon.**

Our people



Sustainability means the world to us. That's why we're putting our people at the heart of what we do.

Inclusion and diversity

Outside the ongoing effects of the pandemic, our customers and colleagues have an expectation that inclusion is at the heart of what we do.

We'll continue to be 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. We understand that the projects we deliver can also have a positive impact and will commit to carrying out Inclusion Impact Assessments.

Our Inclusion Strategy is managed by our Inclusion Council, which is supported by our four internal networks: gender, race and ethnicity, (dis)ability and LGBTQ+. We believe that a balanced workforce will bring benefits to our business. Our networks were created to drive this forward. We will also continue to celebrate significant religious, cultural and celebratory days, and high profile international awareness days both internally and externally, using our internal networks to help mark these respectfully.

Recruitment and development

Ensuring equality at work for everyone is not just a moral argument but a business one, too. Having a representative workforce improves access to talent, enhances decision making, gives greater depth to consumer insight and strengthens employee engagement. Our networks will promote equality and discuss our annual pay gap reports, creating annual action plans to improve them.

To understand the demographic makeup of our workforce, we will have a robust diversity monitoring process with the ability to track demographics throughout the employment lifecycle. We'll make sure we get feedback from our colleagues through staff surveys and open discussions to help inform and develop relevant initiatives.

We will establish targets for recruitment and development whilst engaging with community groups, schools and colleges to encourage people from under-represented groups to join the rail industry.

We want members of under-represented groups to progress in the company and will introduce initiatives which support this development, including mentoring schemes. We're also continually reviewing our recruitment processes to ensure there is no unconscious bias affecting the recruitment process.

Representing our people

Our (dis)ability network

This network is to ensure employee representation for disabled colleagues, including people with physical, mental and non-visible disabilities. We want to go beyond ensuring that all disabled colleagues are able to access the support and reasonable adjustments necessary to do their jobs, and become an employer of choice for disabled people.

Our gender network

This network supports colleagues who face challenges because of their gender. Whether this is looking at actions to close the gender pay gap, or exploring ways to enable parents and carers to work flexibly; our gender network aims to make sure that all colleagues have the same opportunities regardless of their gender. Celebrating events such as International Women's Day helps us to raise the profile of these conversations and make sure that we are engaging with colleagues across our route.

Our race and ethnicity network

This network is dedicated to promoting the importance of race awareness at work and ensuring equality for all, regardless of ethnicity. Following the heightened awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, our network has been leading discussions as to how we can become an even more inclusive employer. Whether it's through encouraging open and honest conversations around experiences of colleagues from different ethnic minority backgrounds, or by engaging an external expert to provide awareness sessions – our race and ethnicity network is leading the way.

Our LGBTQ+ network

This network will continue to look for ways of promoting the LGBTQ+ community up and down the West Coast Main Line. This brilliant group of individuals were instrumental in creating the UK's first fully wrapped Pride train which was staffed by an LGBTQ+ crew for its first official service on Tuesday 25 August 2020. The train highlights our progressive commitment to diversity and inclusion and was fittingly named "Progress" as part of a competition which asked members of the public to submit suggestions. Hundreds of people chose the name Progress, and shared stories of how Pride trains can, and have, made a difference to them.

These networks are not exclusive and do not mean that we will not be looking at others – such as social mobility or the impact of age at work – but provide the focus on some demographic groups that have historically been under-represented in the workplace and have experienced barriers accessing employment and/or services. We also recognise the importance of intersectionality; the idea that a person may have multiple characteristics that interact, and encourage our networks to work closely together.

We must keep talking and will continually raise awareness across the business to understand what inclusion means for everyone whilst encouraging healthy conversation which stimulates progress.

We will obtain Investors in Diversity accreditation 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.



Our goal:

By 2031, all departments will be representative of society with zero pay gaps.



Our customers



Sustainability means the world to us. That's why we're doing what's right for our customers.

Creating solutions for our customers

We're working on our stations so that trains are accessible for everyone, enabling seamless door-to-door journeys and encouraging rail travel. To promote this, we're developing facilities that are attractive, appropriate, inclusive and easy to use.

To be innovative, we need to be original. We need to think differently and incorporate different perspectives so that we can deliver on our initiatives and continually improve the way we do things for customers, communities and the environment.

Listening to our customers is embedded in our culture. We've set up a specialist board – chaired by our Managing Director – to identify, review and act on passenger, non-user and stakeholder aspirations.

We will also hold regional customer panels every quarter to provide an opportunity for customers to discuss and evaluate new proposals, products and services. Alongside this, we'll host quarterly station working groups to discuss and act on locally based customer and stakeholder feedback.

We have an Insights Team who are always on the lookout to capture customer feedback. Currently, we use the Net Advocacy Score (NAS) and the National Rail Passenger Survey, but will also look for more specific feedback through apps like Rate My Journey.

The needs and priorities of customers are constantly evolving. That's why our Customer Proposition Team are always curious to hear customer thoughts which will inform our plans. Furthermore, we have a team of Regional Growth Managers who will ensure we listen out for stakeholder priorities and opportunities at stations.

Making public transport first choice

We play an important role in social mobility and driving down carbon from the transport sector. When it's safe to do so, we will encourage more people to use trains and help to reduce the use of private vehicles. We will set up an Integrated Transport Stakeholder Advisory Forum with the aim of: improving the passenger experience; increasing the use of public transport; demonstrating innovation; improving accessibility; supporting greater rail interconnectivity and encouraging increased integration with other modes of transport.

We will create integrated transport plans for each of our stations and work with the community and local businesses to make sure stations are at the heart of community. We will review the end-to-end journey and increase capacity for cycle parking, install at least 100 electric vehicle charging points, and improve wayfinding to and from our stations.

Our approach will be forward thinking; prepared for an increased presence of electric vehicles as society looks to reduce their carbon footprint. We will also think ahead at the impact of electric bikes and e-scooters.

Making train travel fully accessible

We know that, collectively, we need to improve the accessibility of our rail network. That's why we're planning investments which will help fund accessibility improvements to facilities, systems and service delivery over the next ten years.

We've published our Accessible Transport Plan (ATP) and set up a quarterly accessibility panel to engage with customers alongside a dedicated £1.4m accessibility fund to further develop and improve the ATP. We've carried out third party accessibility audits at all of our stations and, in conjunction with our seven Regional Accessible Station Panels, we will use our annual minor works budget to continually improve our station accessibility.

We're also committed to helping those passengers with non-visible disabilities by promoting the use of the Non-visible Disability Sunflower lanyard and Just A Minute (JAM) card. We will look at increasing the number of Calm Corners on our network, which are specifically designed to offer customers with non-visible disabilities a safe and calm environment in what can be extremely busy and noisy stations.

Our goal:
By 2031, we
want everyone
to experience
integrated,
independent
and low carbon
end-to-end
journeys.

Our communities



Sustainability means the world to us. That's why we're improving life in our communities.

Supporting communities

The people and places we serve are essential in achieving our vision of putting railways back at the heart of community. We'll build strong relationships with the 21 Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) on our network and work with communities to help people get the most out of the railway. Stations will be 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 recognise the heritage, community, landmarks or other aspects of towns and cities for which our stations act as gateways.

Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs)

CRPs are part of the Community Rail Network which is dedicated to supporting community-based groups and partnerships that connect their community with the railway and deliver social benefit. Members deliver a range of activities that bring people together and help communities get the most from their railway, as well as promoting train travel. These activities range from community gardening and arts projects at stations to helping people with disabilities use rail and advising train operators on how to meet local needs.

Investment in the community

To improve life in our communities, we're investing four dedicated funds. The first is an annual contribution to the 21 CRPs on our network, designed to give assurances around finance.

We also have two annual project funds which total over £300k. These funds are designed to allow community groups to present their ideas and bid for funding opportunities.

The first successful project we funded was delivered in September 2020 and named Coventry Acts of Kindness. Organised by the Heart of England Community Rail Partnership, Coventry Acts of Kindness saw customers at Coventry, Tile Hill and Canley stations treated with locally sourced gifts including cakes, cookies and flowers

when arriving at the station as a welcome back to the railway following Covid-19. Whilst doing so, The Kaleidoscope Plus Group, one of the Midlands' leading mental health and wellbeing charities, were on hand to talk with people about any concerns and signpost them to some of the support available.

We're looking forward to delivering many more of these projects with our community partners.

The fourth fund is the Customer and Communities Investment Scheme which runs for five years with a fund amounting to £1.1m per year. It's designed to encourage applications from our customers and communities on projects that address regeneration challenges and tackle social needs across the regions we serve. Propositions could be anything from sustainable journeys to and from the station, to connecting young people with opportunity such as education, jobs and skills.

Providing jobs

As a large employer, we have the opportunity to provide jobs up and down the West Coast Main Line. Whether it's directly with Avanti West Coast, working within our supply chain, or using our stations and trains as springboards for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Social Enterprises (SE), and local suppliers to build businesses.

We believe people should have the opportunity to work with us, regardless of background or education. So, we'll promote our apprenticeships programme in areas of deprivation.

We'll also use our supply chain to promote opportunities by encouraging supplier diversity and market competition. We'll develop this with an annual event which links local and diverse companies, SMEs and Social Enterprises with first-tier suppliers.

We plan to promote our pop-up retail offering at stations and use a marketing regeneration fund to promote overlooked attractions across our network, working with organisations to develop initiatives and promotions to support travel and tourism.

We're committed to conducting our relationships to the highest ethical and moral standards, which includes the prevention of modern slavery and human trafficking in all its forms, and extends to all business dealings and transaction. We will also become a Living Wage accredited employer by the end of 2021.

Providing education

We're committed to providing children and young people on the West Coast Main Line with quality education. This includes how to be safe near the railway, how to read timetables and help with social mobility, outlining the opportunities that the railway can provide as a career choice.

We're developing the Avanti School Programme to ensure we use our platform to promote all forms of inclusion, and demonstrate that we've listened to the next generation by showcasing the benefits of rail in tackling climate change.

Our Avanti School Programme has various methods to engage with at least 4,000 school pupils and 25 schools annually. We'll make sure the programme respects the diversity of our communities to inspire young girls, different ethnicities and those with disadvantaged backgrounds to continue study and join the railway family. We'll host primary school visits at stations with a focus on railway safety, and will carry out career panels and employability workshops for secondary school pupils.

We know that due to Covid-19 job opportunities have been impacted for young people; work experience placements are also not possible. We're dedicated to connecting young people with opportunity and will be working with our Community Rail Partnerships to create inspiring, creative, fun and educational experiences up and down the West Coast Main Line.



Our goal:

**By 2031, we will
have made a real
difference to over
one million lives.**



Along the way

06

Along the way

As a train operating company, Our Responsible Plan concentrates on four key strategic goals which we aim to achieve by 2031. But whilst delivering a plan which impacts these four pillars, there's lots more good we can do along the way.

Here's more of the positive action we'll be taking to affect change and make an impact using our plan. Working with our colleagues, our communities and key industry partners we can ensure that all 17 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals are incorporated into our plans to look after tomorrow.



Rough Sleeper and Child Safeguarding Programme

Rough sleepers often choose railway stations. With our industry and community partners, we can make meaningful interventions and help individuals move towards permanent housing.

The railway is used by vulnerable children as a mechanism to escape and meet with people who may have influenced them. We've the opportunity to spot these individuals and act as the first line of defence with safeguarding measures which protect and direct them to people who can help.

We'll build on the close working relationships we have with our industry partners to connect with some of the most vulnerable people in the communities we serve. We're a proactive member of the Railway Routes Homeless Scheme and follow the principles as outlined in the Government Rough Sleeping Initiative (Prevention – Intervention – Recovery).

In collaboration with the British Transport Police (BTP) and The Railway Children, we'll provide continual training and awareness for our customer-facing colleagues in safeguarding measures so they're equipped to identify and help vulnerable children on our network.



Healthy eating, sustainable sources and food waste

Having a healthy diet provides many health benefits to the individual, as well as a reduced carbon footprint.

We'll introduce new catering ranges on our trains which will include healthy options. We'll also reduce the food waste. Excess food resources will be disposed of responsibly whilst non-perishable food is handed on to charities for wider distribution.

We'll identify the impact of the food we serve on climate change and ensure that we source our food from suppliers using sustainable food production processes and, wherever possible, local suppliers to reduce carbon miles.



Health and wellbeing

Access to health care is a fundamental requirement and we'll continue to provide free travel for parents who need to get to hospital appointments for terminally ill children.

We care for our colleagues and understand that the health and wellbeing of our people is vitally important. So we'll continue to work with our union colleagues to identify the right benefit schemes that can help. Current schemes include: Cycle to Work, access to a confidential counselling service, access to increased health insurance, discounts for gym and leisure facilities and flexible working opportunities.

We'll also continue our work with charities and CRPs to promote mental health in the communities we serve, which includes active participation in the rail industry suicide prevention programme. Instances of suicide on the railway are on the increase. The rail industry suicide prevention programme is a cross-industry collaboration, incorporating mental health first aider awareness training. We'll ensure all of our customer-facing colleagues receive this training, designed to grow knowledge and to identify customers who need assistance when times are at the toughest. We've had numerous examples of our colleagues bringing customers back from the brink at our stations; the impact we have can and does save lives.



Water management

We'll put in place a water management programme designed to improve our understanding of water consumption, reduce our usage and optimise the use of rainwater where possible. We'll also set annual reduction targets and reduce water consumption at least 20% by 2026.

It's not just our water use that's important, it's the water systems at our stations. The flow of rainwater can, in extreme weather events, cause flooding. So we'll review the potential for our drainage networks to use natural sustainable drainage solutions.

Some of our stations consist of large Victorian buildings with old water distribution systems. We've already installed smart water meters at most of our stations and will complete the programme in conjunction with Network Rail. The data provided by the meters will ensure we can react faster to any abnormal usage of water, which could be the result of water leaks or other unknown water wastage. Part of the programme will be working with expert consultants and our tenants to identify ways in which we use water more efficiently and even look at capturing rainwater.



Air quality and wider pollution prevention

Oil and chemical spillages into water courses or onto land; air quality pollution from diesel engine exhaust emissions; and noise from our operations can all have a major impact on our planet, our people, our customers and our communities.

Our environment has benefited from the reduction of air pollution due to fewer planes and cars during Covid-19. And, we'll continue to be an active collaborator with the wider rail industry, taking part in research projects as we look to eradicate air pollution from our own operations. We'll introduce air quality monitoring at our stations and we'll continue to work on reducing train idling, making engine modifications where possible. As we introduce our new cleaner alternatives to replace the diesel Voyager trains, we will see an improvement in the air quality of our services.

We will work to prevent all discharge of chemicals or oils onto the land or water through pollution preventative measures and be mindful of the noise levels from our operations.



Single-use plastics

We have plastics in our supply chain and also manage plastics through our waste processes. That means we have an opportunity to help eliminate single-use plastic where possible and ensure any remaining plastic is captured and recycled so that it can't enter the environment. We can also influence our customers to reduce their use of single-use plastics.

We're working with our suppliers to remove single-use plastic from our customer catering. We will continue to review plastics in our supply chain and collaborate with suppliers to ensure that any plastic that comes into our company can be captured and sent for recycling rather than incineration.

We will join the Refill campaign and install free water refill points at all of our stations by the end of 2021, and on our trains by the end of 2022. This will encourage customers to bring their own water bottles allowing us to eventually remove plastic water bottles from our First Class service. We're also making an effort to reduce single-use coffee cups by offering a discount to customers on our trains when they bring their own.

We'll be responsible when using fish in our onboard menus and will commit to ensuring that any fish used is from sustainably managed stocks and is caught, or farmed, in a way that causes minimal damage to the marine environment and other wildlife.



Natural capital and biodiversity

We understand that there are numerous threats to the UK's biodiversity and will look to manage habitats as assets, maximising the natural capital of the limited land that we have at our stations.

Network Rail, as one of the biggest landowners in the UK, has a strategy to improve biodiversity and we will work collaboratively with them to ensure that we can contribute to create green corridors on our network.

We'll work with our stakeholders, including local authorities and CRPs, to review the opportunities at our stations and in our communities for green walls, green roofs and community gardens.



Collaboration and transparency

We want to include trade unions, transport watchdogs, local authorities, national and regional transport agencies and the Community Rail Network in our plans. In order for our plan to work effectively we need to engage with our people. Not simply communicate, but listen and react.

We will hold regional working groups which meet quarterly and create a programme of annual engagements to be sure that our role in transport, and in driving wider economic growth, is discussed with key stakeholders.

We'll work together with trade unions for the benefit of our people and will run an annual staff survey enabling our people to have their say. We've already created an Employee Director role whose responsibility is to positively engage with colleagues at all levels in the organisation and bring business-wide views and a representative voice direct to the boardroom.

Accountability can only come with transparency, so we'll publish updates of annual progress during a Sustainability Week.

We will continue to certify our Environment and Energy Management system to ISO 14001 & 50001 (the international standards for environmental and energy management systems), getting third party scrutiny on our approach and independently auditing our environmental datasets and social value scores.



The wheels
are in motion

07

If we work
together, we
win together.



Making a difference today to look after tomorrow

We will only achieve our sustainable development ambitions if we work in partnership with the wider rail industry, our people and our supply chain. This plan is all of ours.



Working together

We're committed to engaging with the rail industry and sharing best practice to develop programmes which drive forward the sustainable development agenda. This means working with other train operating companies, the Rail Delivery Group, the RSSB, ORR and any other transport body that promotes industry-wide working.

To make sure we are working well together, we'll create a collaborative business relationship management system and certify it to ISO 44001. The system will initially look to specific partners that are vital for our operations.

Network Rail, as the rail infrastructure provider and our station landlord, are a crucial partner. We'll work together to improve the sustainability of the West Coast Main Line using their Environmental Sustainability Strategy and their Social Sustainability Strategy.

Our Responsible Plan covers lots of ground. In the coming months and years we'll be working with our people, our partners, our stakeholders and our customers to make sure we're all aware how to go about achieving our four transformative goals as part of our 10-year strategy.

We're all responsible for Our Responsible Plan, and we can all make a difference today to look after tomorrow. The wheels are in motion. So get involved and together we can build back better for a stronger and more sustainable future.

References

08

UN Sustainable Development Goals

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

Science based targets

<https://sciencebasedtargets.org/>

RSSB UK Rail Sustainable Development Principles

<https://www.rssb.co.uk/sustainability/rail-sustainable-development-principles>

RSSB Decarbonisation Task Force Report

<https://www.rssb.co.uk/en/sustainability/decarbonisation>

RSSB UK Rail Air Quality Strategic Framework

<https://www.rssb.co.uk/sustainability/air-quality>

RSSB Social Value

<https://www.rssb.co.uk/sustainability/social-value>

Network Rail Sustainability

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/campaigns/sustainability/>

- Network Rail Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- Network Rail Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy
- Network Rail Biodiversity Action Plan
- Network Rail Social Sustainability Strategy (yet to be published)

Community Rail Network

<https://communityrail.org.uk/>





Our Responsible Plan | First edition
Information correct as of March 2021