

Social Value Report

2022 - 2023



Operated by West Midlands Trains



About this report

What is Social Value?

This is West Midlands Trains' second Social Value Report. Our activity has an essential value for society and our industry. This report outlines the impact we have on our local communities, the environment, and the economy and highlights our social value activity from 2022-2023.

We are acutely aware of our responsibility in supporting the social and economic prosperity of the regions we serve in addition to delivering service enhancements and customer satisfaction for our passengers.

In this report there are examples and case studies demonstrating just a handful of the activities we undertake over and above our day-to-day operations.

RSSB

Rail social value tool

The Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT) has been developed to provide a collective and consistent method for understanding and measuring the social impacts of organisations, projects and programmes across the rail industry and its supply chain. It provides a monetary value for the activities we undertake.

In 2018, RSSB research identified 10 key social value areas for the rail industry:

Community safety

Accessibility

Employment and skills

Social inclusion

Diversity and inclusion

Health and wellbeing

Employee engagement

Customer satisfaction

Regeneration

Local and sustainable procurement

Each of the projects and activities highlighted in this report contributes to one or more of these social value areas.



A message from our Managing Director

Our organisation exists to provide passenger rail services in line with our vision and values.

Serving our local communities and creating value and prosperity is a key part of that. West Midlands Trains consists of two network brands; West Midlands Railway, which provides local rail services across the West Midlands and London Northwestern Railway, which runs services between Northampton and London Euston, including local branch lines and long-distance services along the West Coast Mainline to Liverpool.

Our business continues to benefit greatly from community partnership and the positive impact it generates for our staff, stations, and overall customer experience.

This report is essential to understanding the impacts our business has on our society, both positive and negative, so that we can maximise the positive, and reduce - wherever possible - the negative.

I'm delighted that in the last year our total social, environmental, and economic impact has increased from **£269,853,683.59** to **£730,360,860.90** according to the RSVT.

The last year has been a very exciting and successful year for our business, our partners and our volunteers.

A significant highlight in 2022 was the role our business played in the successful delivery of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

During the Games period, we carried an estimated **60% of all additional rail customers**, equating to **1.2 million journeys** and a **180% increase in footfall** for West Midlands Railway services.

We **delivered infrastructure** improvement works, including a **brand-new station** at Perry Barr, with long-term customer improvements in mind.

We **focused relentlessly on operational delivery**, additional command and control mechanisms, and proactively managed train maintenance to **maximise fleet availability**.

We deployed **170 management volunteers** for at least three shifts each during the Games to boost customer experience.



We launched our new Community Rail Strategy, which was created in collaboration with our community rail partnerships and the Community Rail Network. We have designed the strategy based on five themes: youth engagement; wellbeing; personal safety; rail recovery and encouraging modal shift.

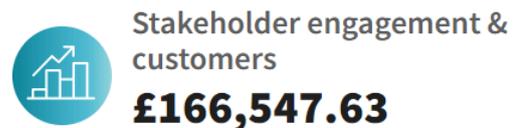
We have delivered some effective events and projects, many of which are included in this report. These activities were developed following conversations with colleagues, customers and community groups about the issues that matter most to them.

We are exceptionally proud of the impact they have had so far, and we look forward to doing more in the year ahead.



Ian McConnell
Managing Director
West Midlands Trains

Our headline achievements



The UN Sustainable Development Goals

Our social value activity supports **8** of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



Community Education



With our staff witnessing first-hand the issues and consequences that anti-social behaviour (ASB) and high-risk behaviour is having on our network, it has become clear that the issue of ASB needed to be addressed in a more proactive and robust way.

This year our Revenue Protection team has explored the lines of route where anti-social and high-risk behaviours were of concern and made contact with schools and colleges to tackle the issue through education, enabling WMT to highlight the dangers individuals face.

A number of bespoke educational packages have been developed and tailored to different key stage groups and to ensure age and learning level appropriate material could be presented within schools and colleges.

WMT has developed educational packages using resources developed by ourselves, British Transport Police and Network Rail. From March 2022 until the end of the year, 11 educational establishments embraced the work and welcomed presentations from the team.

We have spent 109 hours delivering railway safety and ASB talks to 5,926 young people aged between 11-17. We have supported 30 young people with additional learning needs by giving them the opportunity to travel on the railway to develop their confidence around travelling on the network, identifying ways to stay safe, how to report concerns, how to find information and how to purchase a ticket.

We have established a long-term partnership with Baskerville School in Birmingham who are providing autism awareness training for WMT colleagues in return for the work we have delivered for their pupils.

Elsewhere, we supported the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership to deliver a project for 21 young people from a group which was gathering at Lidlington station in Bedfordshire each day, vandalising planters and intimidating passengers.



The project consisted of weekly workshops run by a qualified facilitator with benefits including reduced anti-social behaviour at Lidlington station and around the village, engaging young people in the design and production of artwork at the station, increased community pride and cohesion and involvement in the work of the Friends of Lidlington Station.

Some of the quotes from the young people who took part in the sessions include;

- 'Gives me purpose'.
- 'Really good for my wellbeing'
- 'Good for my mental health'
- 'I don't smoke when I know this is on'
- 'I don't really hang out at the station anymore'

Youth engagement is a key theme in our community rail strategy which is why we supported the work of the Heart of England Community Rail Partnership in 2022. The group worked in partnership with Finham Park 2 secondary school in Coventry to deliver “**Rail Week**” sessions to 120 students from Year 8.

Rail industry colleagues from WMT, WMRE, CrossCountry and the Railway Children joined the CRP to deliver career sessions, sustainability workshops and **rail safety talks**. At the start of the week, only 9% of students said they would consider **a career in the rail industry** but by the end of this week this percentage was up 60% and students commented that some of their favourite parts of the week were the STEM sessions, the art and the Sustainable Stations workshop. The CRP is now delivering further rail weeks and organising school trips by trains.

The demand for Rail Safety talks and Railway Confidence training has risen year-on-year and **since the pandemic there has been an increase in nervousness among children** when taking the train and concerns about how safe it is.

In response to this, WMT has worked with Digital Urban. Place, who are leading VR experts to produce an immersive **virtual reality game** which brings railway stations to life, highlights risks of the railway and sets the children quests to find out information about staying safe.

The game is aimed at 9–14 year-olds as a stand-alone tool or for use in parallel with an in-person presentation and station visit. The game is available to schools across the WMT network and community partners including CRPs and station adoption groups.

In 2022 Woodrush Academy secured **£80,000** of funding from WMT to develop projects for their students aged 16-17 connected to a pioneering volunteer station adoption scheme. The scheme enables special needs students to take part in railway activities as part of a City & Guilds Level Two qualification. It is anticipated that number will increase to circa 200 per year once the programme is established and best practice has been shared with regional secondary schools to encourage duplication of this scheme. Network Rail, has created in-house apprenticeship opportunities in partnership with the school off the back of the project.

The social value of our Rail Safety Training and School Talks Training initiatives is calculated by the RSVT as **£21,114,798**.

Community Rail and Station Adoption

At West Midlands Trains we have over **400** registered station adoption volunteers who look after **77** stations across the whole network and in the past 12 months they have donated over **11,064 hours**, which equates to **£165,960** worth of investment back into the community.

We have recognised a number of community champions from across our network for all of the hard work and dedication to the communities we serve.



We invest over **£163,000** into the five community rail partnerships (CRPs) across the West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway network: the Marston Vale, Abbey Line, North Staffordshire, Worcestershire and Heart of England CRPs.

The past 12 months have been very busy for the Abbey Line CRPs who have been particularly active promoting the return of their train service, after a two-year hiatus during the pandemic.

The Days Out by Rail campaign, launched in the summer and was developed in response to the increased interest in domestic travel and staycations identified through Visit Britain's Consumer Sentiment Tracker. In a move to help get local residents back on our train track, they launched an awareness campaign 'What's on at the end of the line' to support our local communities and train service through our Abbey Line Days Out programme.

Worcestershire CRP was the driving force behind Platform, a community rail education scheme developed in partnership with Severnside, Transwilt and Gloucester Community Rail Partnerships. The scheme employs a team of fully qualified teachers to deliver rail education sessions for schools in the Worcestershire area and beyond.

Platform was established at the beginning of 2022 and by June that year, the team had delivered workshops and assemblies to **1,848** students, with **129** young people taking part in



rail familiarisation visits. The project website had **1,110** registered users, with **227** lessons downloaded and the project was awarded the top prize for Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability at this year's Community Rail Awards.

We now support three Community Station Partnerships (CSPs), which were developed to support railway volunteers who are keen to work at their local stations but do not want to become Community Rail Partnerships. CSPs are collectives of adopted stations that enable central administration, they are volunteer led, supported by independent trustees, and have objectives to encourage people to adopt railway stations, developing the stations as community assets and bringing people together to enhance the passenger experience by making the station more welcoming with a sense of community and localism. For the 'rurally based' 'Beyond the Hills' CSP, a further objective has been added: 'To give rural community railway a voice'. All the partnerships are not for profit entities and work programmes are based on the principles of rail recovery, station upgrades and local economic and social regeneration with project funding via the TOC and other sources. The Community Station Partnerships:

The Friends of the Shakespeare Line (FoSL) has gone from strength to strength over the past 12 months. Six trustees and over **80** volunteers are responsible for all the hard work, effort and commitment that makes all the **18** stations welcoming, enhanced the experience for the train user and makes the railway a part of each community at their station.

With the involvement of Network Rail, West Midlands Rail Executive and Birmingham City Council, has demonstrated that collaborative working and a Value for Money approach is a highly efficient model that currently cannot be surpassed. They are determined to ensure that the most socially disadvantaged communities along part of the Shakespeare Line, within the inner city of Birmingham, are equally included and get the opportunities and chances that more affluent suburban and rural areas already enjoy.

The Chase Line CSP has been created to inspire people to adopt their local railway stations and to enhance the passenger experience to encourage more travel along the Chase Line. The group comprises 23 volunteers who are all station adopters, the Chair of the group also works with local stakeholders to help tackle increasing levels of anti-social behaviour evident along the line.

The Beyond the Hills CSP is managed by Rail & Bus for Herefordshire and operated by volunteers to support the adopters of railway stations at Ledbury and Colwall. The group is supported by several local organisations including Ledbury Town Council, Ledbury Civic Society, Ledbury in Bloom, Sustainable Ledbury, and Sustainable Transport Herefordshire.

The social value of our station adoption initiatives is calculated by the RSVT as **£215,849.17**.



Regeneration

In 2022 we invested **£830,000** into 25 Customer and Communities Improvement Fund projects, in addition to this we secured over **£1m** 3rd party matched funding, including volunteer hours. The themes of this year's projects included;

- Bringing disused buildings back into use
- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Addressing loneliness and isolation
- Health and wellbeing
- Railway confidence

To support the regeneration projects we developed a disused station buildings programme to cover five stations and we spent the past year liaising with local communities and CCIF project leads to support potential occupants for disused station buildings. The aim of the programme is to add community facilities to local neighbourhoods whilst broadening the role of the 'station' to offer more services to the local area.

With the rail industry taking a more flexible and enabling approach to building leases in relation to community use, this programme has resulted in collaborative working with schools, local community groups, councils, rail user groups and station partnerships and has seen the creation of the following amenities at WMR stations:

- Community, Visitor & Arts Hub at Stratford-upon-Avon
- Woodrush School Station Community Cabin at Wythall
- Science Museum 'The Science Station' at Great Malvern
- Art & Transport Community Centre at Ledbury
- Community Enterprise Hub at Henley

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

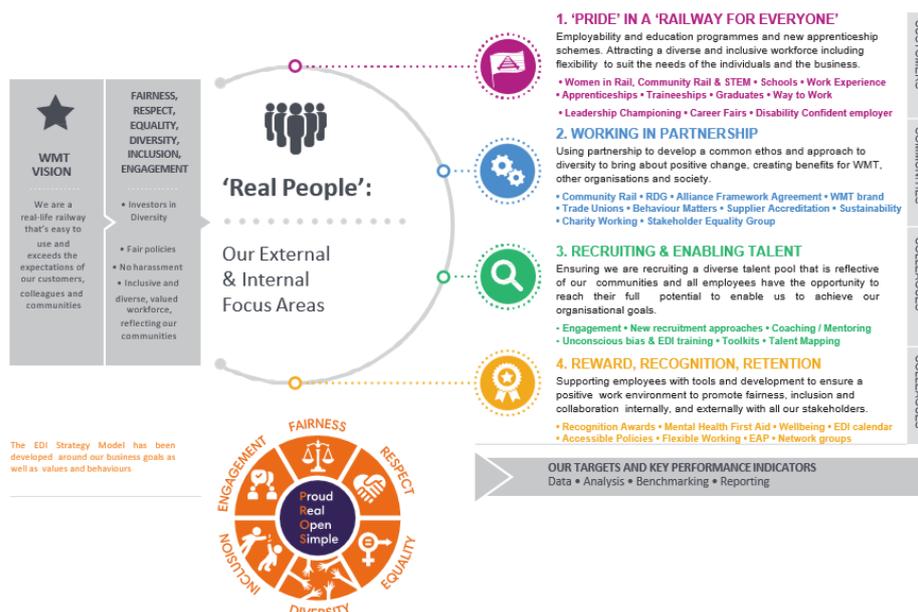
Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy and brand 'You Matter' outlines how we expect all our customers, colleagues and communities to be inclusive.

Our company values (proud, real, open and simple) and the principles of FREDIE (Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement) are also embedded throughout our business.

Our annual business plan for the Department of Transport (DfT) includes several EDI KPIs and commitments, as we recognise their positive impact on growth.



This year we successfully retained our Investors in Diversity accreditation and we remain committed to delivering on commitments for the Women in Rail EDI Charter, which aligns with our own EDI strategy.



To deliver our EDI strategy, we have an action plan which focuses on 10 key areas:

- embedding the strategy
- effective communication
- inclusive: procurement and recruitment
- training and progression
- performance management
- wellbeing
- reward and retention
- fostering a safe and inclusive culture and
- a focus on accessibility both internally and externally

Our inclusive culture ensures we bring ‘everyone to the table’ to make EDI everyone’s responsibility.

We have a Wellbeing steering group, Mental Health First Aiders, Engagement Champions, 4 inclusion network groups focusing on gender, race, LGBTQ+ and disability matters and an externally-focussed Stakeholder Equality Group, with the key aim of including and representing a range of disability needs to help improve the accessibility of our network. The group consults regarding railway improvements and provides a positive influence on decision making at WMT.



The group also benchmarks our performance from an external perspective and provides valuable input into topics like new station designs, new trains, being Disability Confident and tackling barriers and issues affecting our customers.

The RSVT calculates the value of our rail accessibility at **£755,300.57**.



Training

We have a number of learning and development, performance and talent management programmes to benefit our people.

Our workforce of c3000 receive a variety of training and development interventions. We continue to maintain the skillsets of staff for safety critical roles and we also ensure that we provide just in time learning to address dynamic learning needs of departments and individuals across the organisation.

1375 employees have completed Accessibility Matters eLearning in the business and **180** have completed the Hidden Disabilities Module hosted on the platform.

We ensure that our staff receive blended high-quality training on EDI including front-line staff who have regular inclusion topics on their safety briefs because non-inclusion can impact wellbeing, which can cause safety incidents.

This training enables staff to provide an inclusive customer service to our diverse passengers across the industry.

The social value of our training initiatives is calculated by the RSVT as **£6,079,147.45**.

Safety

We recognise that public transport can often feel unsafe for some passengers and that instances of threatening, harassing or unwanted sexual behaviour are too high across the rail network.

Based on information shared by our customers we know that there needs to be more easily accessible information so that passengers know how to alert a member of traincrew and how to report incidents. Working closely with The British Transport Police and the Rail Delivery Group among others, we have held events at major stations on the WMT network to raise awareness about passenger safety, how to report incidents and what constitutes sexual harassment.

We have handed out over 400 personal safety alarms, information on the BTP 61016 text number and their Railway Guardian App at these events, which were also a great opportunity for us to promote our **Arrive Safe** campaign with useful hints and tips for staying safe and feeling more confident when travelling.

The events have been supported by a wide network of volunteers and stakeholders including: Women in Community Rail, CrossCountry Trains, Heart of England Community Rail Partnership, West Midlands Rail Executive, BTP and Network Rail.



New Fleet

2022 saw the successful introduction of our new Class 196 fleet, which had been delayed because of the pandemic.

This is part of a **£690m** investment, benefitting our passengers by providing additional seating capacity and more space for bike storage to encourage modal shift to active and public transport, as well as accessibility enhancements.



Looking forward

Understanding and reporting on our social value offers us an important opportunity to prioritise and broaden the areas in which we measure our social impact.

This report touches on just a small number of activities that benefit our customers, stakeholders, colleagues and communities.

As always, we welcome engagement and feedback on our work and opportunities to improve.

Please get in touch or get involved by contacting corporate.affairs@wmtrains.co.uk