



**London Northwestern Railway  
West Midlands Railway**

Operated by WM Trains Limited

**Social Value Report**  
2025

## Foreword

I'm delighted to introduce this report, outlining our social value impact across our London Northwestern Railway and West Midlands Railway networks in 2025.

Our story over the last year has been one of continued transformation as our **£1 billion investment into new trains and infrastructure** comes to fruition, making better journeys and growing our annual passenger numbers by 2 million to **67 million**.

We are acutely aware of our responsibility to our people and our communities. Connecting people and places is vital to securing economic and social benefits and we are committed to playing our part in providing a thriving, safe and sustainable railway.

In 2025 we launched our three commitments: Improving Performance, Improving Customer Experience and Driving Growth. Our **3400 employees** are focused on delivering against these commitments, which in turn will deliver enhanced social value benefits within the communities we serve.

In addition, we have provided skills development and employment opportunities through our apprenticeships, work experience and placement schemes and our graduate programme, as well as delivering over **43000 hours of training** to our employees.

We have made significant strides in embedding social value at the core of our business. Our Social Value Strategy and data reporting framework provide the tools to measure and continually enhance the positive impact of our work. This reflects our ambition to set a new benchmark for how rail can champion stronger, healthier, and more inclusive communities.

Our social value activity is closely aligned with our sustainability strategy which embeds a focus on planet, people, prosperity and partnership in everything we do and the way in which we do it.

I am proud that we have delivered **over £182 million in social value** in 2025; an increase of £39 million from 2024.

This is only possible with the dedication of our employees, our community volunteers, our industry partners and our stakeholders. I look forward to building on this over the next year.

**Ian McConnell**

**Managing Director**

## 1. About this Report

**At London Northwestern Railway and West Midlands Railway, social value sits at the heart of who we are. We define social value as:**

**“Social value means delivering a net positive impact for the communities we serve – supporting the planet, people, prosperity and partnerships. We look beyond our core *passenger* transport services to understand what truly matters to people, using diverse perspectives to guide decisions that enhance community and individual wellbeing. By embedding social value into our culture, values, and strategies, we aim to create lasting, measurable benefits that support a fairer, more sustainable future.”**

Across these pages, we provide case studies that demonstrate how our work extends far beyond the railway to make a meaningful difference. From community partnerships to environmental initiatives, each action reflects our commitment to supporting our people, our customers, and the communities we serve.

To measure our impact, we use the RSSB’s Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT) to provide a consistent and credible assessment of our work. Our social value activity is aligned with the four pillars of our Sustainability Strategy: **planet, people, prosperity and partnership**, alongside the RSSB’s Sustainable Rail Blueprint. These pillars reflect the environmental, economic, and social dimensions of sustainability and serve as the foundation for our long-term strategy:

**Planet** – Protecting the environment through the reduction of our ecological footprint and the adoption of sustainable solutions that secure both present needs and a resilient future.

**People** – Supporting our workforce and communities through inclusive, ethical, and accessible practices.

**Prosperity** – Ensuring business resilience and longevity by integrating sustainability into operational planning and decision-making.

**Partnerships** – Building strong, collaborative relationships that enhance connectivity and create shared value.

In 2025, we focused on embedding social value and sustainability across our organisation. With strengthened leadership and a renewed strategic focus, we are driving cultural change and aligning our operations with long-term environmental and social ambitions.

**Our Keeping it Simple... to be Safe, Secure and Sustainable campaign** ensures social value and sustainability are central to decision-making; from delivering our Net Zero plan, to championing responsible business practices.



## 2. Social Value Overview

Our social value performance for 2025 reflects a strong organisational commitment to delivering meaningful social, economic, and environmental impact across our operations. In total, we have generated **over £182 million in social value** across the business, driven largely by substantial social outcomes (£96.4m) and economic contributions (£83.7m), complemented by **£2.3m in environmental social value**. We have supported extensive job creation and skills development, including 3400 full-time equivalent roles, apprenticeships, and a wide range of training, mentoring, and community initiatives.

Environmentally, we achieved a reduction of over 11,940 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, measured against our 2019/2020 baseline year, demonstrating major progress toward our carbon mitigation goals. Additional activity in biodiversity enhancement and waste reduction further showcases our commitment to wider environmental stewardship.

Collectively, these achievements highlight the scale of our contribution to communities, the economy, and the environment—reinforcing our ongoing dedication to creating long-term, sustainable social value.

Our efforts directly contributed to **9 of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals**:

- Good health & wellbeing
- Quality education
- Decent work & economic growth
- Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Reduced inequalities
- Sustainable cities and communities
- Life on land
- Peace, justice and strong institutions
- Partnership for the goals

— a clear sign of our role in building a healthier, more sustainable future.

## 3. Our People

### Rail at the Heart of Communities

Our stations are more than transport hubs, they are vibrant local spaces shaped by community-led projects, partnerships, and the dedication of our volunteers. Through our Community Rail Partnerships, Station Adoption groups, and a wide range of volunteer initiatives, we help bring people together, revitalise shared spaces, and make rail travel more welcoming, accessible, and inclusive.

We are especially grateful to the **411 volunteers** supporting **73 adopted stations** across our networks. Their passion and commitment help local people take real ownership of their stations, working alongside our community team to create places that reflect and celebrate the communities they serve. Together, these efforts generated approximately **£16million in added social value** — a testament to the power of collaboration and the pride we share in helping our communities thrive.

### Wellbeing

Alongside our partners, mental health charity ReThink Mental Illness, we are proud to have launched 'The Hub' at Wolverhampton Railway Station in 2025. It is only the second facility of its kind in the country and was established in partnership with ReThink, Black Country NHS, the University of Wolverhampton and British Transport Police in response to the worsening mental health crisis and concerns identified by our front-line staff at the station.

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The Hub is a new safeguarding space, offering talking therapy, signposting and support for people struggling with their mental health and creating a safe, inclusive environment for individuals in need. We also offer The Hub to other local charities and public bodies (including Gamblers Anonymous, Andy's Man Club and Samaritans) to host a broader range of support services, including housing advice, carer support and legal advice — leaving a lasting impact on the local community. In its first 6 months, more than **600 people** used the facility.

Carolyn Green, chief nurse of the Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, said she believes the facility is “lifesaving”.

This project alone has helped us to generate **£459,600 in social value** in 2025 and is forecast to generate £675,867 in social value throughout 2026.

## White Ribbon

In 2025, the second year of our three-year White Ribbon programme, we deepened our commitment to eradicating violence against women and girls by men and boys. As a White Ribbon-accredited organisation, we sponsored the **We Speak Up** campaign, featuring 16 men who are White Ribbon Ambassadors from diverse backgrounds, through a public portrait exhibition in Milton Keynes launched on White Ribbon Day on 25 November. Alongside campaign sponsorship, we encouraged people to make the Promise - to never use, excuse or stay silent on men's violence against women - through pop-up engagement events across our stations, depots and offices.

White Ribbon has also been selected as our official corporate charity for 2025–26, with ongoing work to raise awareness, challenge harmful behaviours and upskill colleagues, for example through active bystander training, to help improve safety across the rail network.

## Railway 200

In celebration of **Railway 200**, we gathered stories from our colleagues to showcase in a special edition newspaper. This highlighted the generations of families who have worked on the railway and some unsung heroes who have helped make our business and the wider industry what it is today. Every employee across our business received their own personal copy of the newspaper.

While it was important to celebrate the heritage and history of the modern railway, we also wanted to provide opportunities for young people to travel by train and raise awareness of careers on the railway.

We partnered with West Coventry Academy, a secondary school in a deprived area on a project called **Visit 200**, an initiative that challenged students at schools in Coventry and Warwickshire to visit a total of 200 railway stations in 2025.

Having worked with other train operators to support the project, thousands of young people were given the chance to travel by train for free, offering new experiences and opportunities to visit a range of destinations.

Over **600** students from 20 schools made trips on our network as part of the initiative.

Computer science students from West Coventry Academy put their employability skills to the test by creating a Visit 200 webpage, listing 200 stations to be ticked off, with the challenge continuing until all 200 stations have been visited by a school.

Railway stations on the list included Watford Junction, where students visited the Warner Bros Studios.

Our community rail partners also hosted the students at their stations, with bespoke activities and tours.

## People-Centred Rail

We are committed to providing a railway that works for everyone by leading equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and accessibility initiatives that create meaningful improvements for passengers to help ensure we reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

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Our EDI Steering Group and colleague networks champion gender, race, disability, and LGBTQ+ inclusion, to raise awareness, improve understanding and help ensure everyone can be themselves at work.

We are proud to have achieved Investors in Diversity reaccreditation, reinforcing our dedication to continuous improvement. We recognise there is much more work to be done to improve diversity and representation, but we are pleased that last year **31%** of new starters with the business were female and **30%** were from an ethnic minority background.

In 2025 we once again took part in Pride events across the network, bringing together LGBTQ+ colleagues and allies to demonstrate our commitment to representation and allyship.

We want to deliver a railway that is accessible to all, including those with visible and hidden disabilities and we work closely with stakeholders with lived experience to listen to and act on their feedback.

Every colleague completes Accessibility Matters training, and inclusive language and equality impact assessments are embedded in our design processes. We've made significant station upgrades across the network, including additional accessibility improvements to help-points, provision of tactile maps and providing customers with assistance cards to use when they are travelling.

Assistance waiting spaces on platforms launched last year have been introduced at more locations including on our flagship Cross City line, the busiest commuter route outside of London.

Based on customer feedback we have designed a sensory pack for customers who have non-visible disabilities such as anxiety or neurodivergence. This pack can provide support tools to help manage sensory sensitivities and create a more comfortable journey.

Recognising that neurodivergent customers can experience increased stress and anxiety when travelling, we introduced sensory packs for children and young adults to create a more comfortable journey experience.

Each pack contains items that are designed to help reduce overwhelming feelings and anxiety. They are available free of charge, and on request at each of our staffed hub stations.

## Culture For Sustainability

We continue to build a strong culture of sustainability by embedding sustainable behaviours into daily working practices and strengthening the values that support our long-term environmental and social goals. Our **Sustainability360** programme underpins this work by placing sustainability at the heart of our business, setting clear expectations for leadership and equipping colleagues with the tools and knowledge to contribute meaningfully to our ambitions.

Last year, we delivered a range of foundational activities, including our first e-learning module to support improved recycling practices and the creation of an internal Sustainability Champions group. Together, these initiatives along with others highlighted in this report demonstrate our commitment to embedding sustainability into everyday activities and creating lasting, meaningful impact.

## 4. Our Planet

We continue to identify ways to contribute sustainably towards the planet through our business activities and have embarked on a significant culture change campaign to ensure all employees understand the role they can play in this.

Our efforts helped us to generate **over £2.3million of environmental social value** in 2025.

The effects of climate change are becoming increasingly stark, and the railway itself is seeing significant disruption from extreme weather events. Reducing our carbon footprint is essential to protecting the communities we serve. Cutting emissions is not only an environmental responsibility — it is a core part of the social value we create, helping to safeguard public health, support local prosperity, and build a more resilient future.

## Net Zero Carbon Rail

Our **Net Zero Carbon Strategy 2050** sets out a clear, long-term pathway to fully decarbonise our operations, across both train operations and broader activities. As we progress, we are expanding our work to include Scope 3 carbon data collection, which covers all indirect emissions produced by our suppliers and product use/disposal. Deeper collaboration with our supply chain will ensure that the social and environmental benefits of decarbonisation extend well beyond our own organisation.

We are also delivering a targeted energy-efficiency programme across our stations and train maintenance depots to reduce energy consumption, cut emissions, and lower operating costs — all of which contribute to greater social value. Key initiatives include:

- Reviewing heating and cooling systems to identify improvements
- Optimising Building Management System controls to further improve energy usage
- Exploring opportunities to improve building fabric efficiency
- Conducting regular energy audits
- Developing options to replace gas systems with low- or zero-carbon alternatives

## Clean Air

Working with the RSSB, we have contributed to the national Air Quality Monitoring Network, installing monitoring equipment at seven of our stations to help build a reliable baseline of air quality data across the rail network. We have also developed an **Air Quality Improvement Plan**, aligned with a standardised industry approach to ensure meaningful, measurable progress.

At Tyseley Depot in Birmingham, we have introduced shore power supplies, allowing diesel trains to be powered for testing without running their engines. This significantly reduces local emissions and improves air quality for colleagues and nearby residents.

## A Quieter Railway

We recognise that noise pollution affects wellbeing, and reducing its impact is an important part of our social value commitment. We have developed a **Noise Management Strategy** to strengthen how we report, investigate and respond to noise concerns across our network. Next year, we will continue to build on this work by analysing noise hotspots in more detail and identifying targeted mitigation measures to improve the experience of our neighbours and communities.

## Preparing for Climate Change

The risks introduced by climate change will need to be addressed by developing and implementing robust adaptation measures. These measures are essential to safeguard the railway from the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events. By proactively adapting assets, systems, and operations, the industry can reduce vulnerability, enhance safety for colleagues and the public, and maintain service continuity. This will also ensure that the railway ecosystem is resilient to climate change now and in the future.

Our **Weather Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy** sets out how we will work to improve our ability to anticipate, respond to, adapt and recover from climate change. It brings together short-term weather resilience and long-term adaptation planning into a single, integrated approach, so we can act now, and plan for what's coming. This strategy will evolve over time, driven by learning, evidence, and the experiences of those delivering and using the railway every day.

## A Railway for Nature

Supporting biodiversity is another way we create social and environmental value for the communities we serve. Our stations and depots have the potential to act as green corridors, connecting habitats and strengthening local ecosystems. In 2025, we partnered with **The Wildlife Trust**, to begin working with our station adopters and community groups to map biodiversity across our network and identify opportunities for improvement.

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This work will allow us to measure Biodiversity Index Scores and Biodiversity Net Gain, helping us prioritise locations for targeted action. These efforts will play an important role in supporting Network Rail's commitment to achieving Biodiversity Net Gain by 2035 and in enhancing the natural environment for future generations.

## Circular Economy and Zero Waste

By cutting the amount of waste we produce and improving how we recycle, we help protect the environment, conserve resources, and support healthier, more sustainable places. Our **Waste Management Strategy** aims to strengthen our role as a responsible neighbour, improve operational efficiency, and contribute to long-term resilience across our network. We are also planning other initiatives to recycle materials used in operational activity.

Over the 2024/25 financial year, we **recycled 944 tonnes** of waste.

To make recycling easier for both colleagues and customers, last year we began rolling out separate waste bins across our depots and stations in line with the Separation of Waste Regulations. Staff areas now include dedicated bins for general waste, dry mixed recycling, food waste and glass, with customer-facing recycling points being introduced throughout 2026/27.

By training colleagues and raising awareness among customers, we aim to increase recycling rates and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill — delivering environmental and social value for the communities around our network.

Our Uniform Recycling initiative is another way we prevent valuable materials from going to waste. Dedicated drop-off points at four of our sites allow colleagues to return excess or end-of-life textiles, which are then securely processed by a specialist supplier and repurposed into new products. This scheme supports a circular economy, reduces environmental impact, and reinforces a culture of sustainability across our workforce. As it continues to grow, we plan to expand it to more locations, increasing the social and environmental value it delivers.

To reduce single-use waste in our offices, we have introduced a reusable coffee cup scheme that allows colleagues to borrow a cup when visiting local cafés, attending meetings or travelling across the network. This simple initiative helps cut down on disposable cups, supports our wider waste-reduction goals, and encourages everyday sustainable habits that contribute to long-term social value.

## Protecting and Conserving Water

To safeguard local waterways and ensure responsible rail operations at our train maintenance depots, these sites undergo regular environmental audits to identify improvements and maintain high standards of compliance.

Working with specialist partners, we developed a comprehensive **Pollution Prevention Plan** that strengthens our ability to identify, assess and mitigate risks. This includes:

- Reviewing environmental sensitivity data to understand potential hazards and pathways for pollution
- Conducting on-site assessments of chemical and fuel storage, containment systems, drainage and site management practices
- Combining field and desk-based evidence to classify sites by risk level and develop targeted recommendations

This structured approach reduces environmental impact, supports robust incident response planning, and ensures we continue to operate in line with industry best practice.

Our Class 196 fleet is equipped with a mobile waste treatment solution that treats, cleans and recycles wastewater on trains meaning that wastewater from taps can be reused to flush the toilet.

Across our estate we have also installed low flow taps to reduce water consumption and ensure efficiency.

## 5. Prosperity

### Careers, Economy and Sustainable Growth

We are committed to building a skilled, inclusive and resilient workforce that reflects the communities we serve. Through our apprenticeships, graduate programmes and targeted recruitment, we are investing in people, widening access to opportunities within the rail industry and supporting long-term, sustainable careers.

Developing our people is central to delivering a safe, reliable and customer-focused railway. In 2025, we delivered **over 43000 hours of training**, including e-learning and face-to-face sessions on personal track safety, customer service, leadership and personal effectiveness.

With 3,400 direct employees, we are a significant employer and provide accessible routes into the rail industry for people at every stage of their career. We actively encourage applications from underrepresented groups — including veterans, ethnic minorities and women — and use insights from our annual colleague engagement survey to strengthen our approach. This employment alone generated **over £44million in social value**, demonstrating the wider economic and social contribution of our workforce.

### Skills Development and Work Experience

In partnership with the National Training Academy for Rail and Birmingham Metropolitan College, we deliver an industry-leading trailblazer apprenticeship scheme. In 2024, we became the first UK Train Operating Company to achieve the **Engineering Apprenticeships: Employer Kitemark**, recognising us as a best-in-class employer for engineering apprenticeships. In 2025, our apprenticeship numbers grew to **143**. In addition, our graduate placement scheme continues to develop future talent, with 7 graduates in the business in 2025, gaining experience across various front-line roles before moving into a permanent position.

Together, our apprenticeships and graduate placements generated over **£6,900,000 in social value**.

We also offer meaningful work experience opportunities for young people exploring careers in rail. In 2025, we offered several placements across head office teams, helping young talent to build employability skills and understand the breadth of roles within the industry. This contributed **£141,000 in added social value**.

### Seamless Travel

Our **Seamless Journeys Strategy** aims to transform how passengers move across the network and beyond, with sustainability and social value at its core. We recognise that encouraging people to shift from private car use to public and active transport requires more than reliable train services—it demands an integrated, accessible, and inclusive experience that benefits communities.

Last year we undertook an awareness and behavioural change campaign highlighting the time saving benefits of travelling by train compared to private car to encourage people to rethink their travel choices.

Our **World Car Free Day** campaign invited passengers to leave their cars at home and explore greener travel options. By showcasing how rail travel integrates with walking, cycling, and local transport, the campaign reinforced the role of sustainable journeys in reducing carbon emissions and improving community wellbeing.

We issued **4314** vouchers offering 50% off advanced tickets to people who pledged to swap their usual car journey for the train. Based on the information they provided on the car journey they planned to swap, **87,453** car miles were avoided because of the campaign.

- Stakeholders and partners were keen to support our campaign: “Choosing to travel via rail means helping the environment, avoiding congestion and being productive.” – [Callum Anderson](#), MP for Bletchley.

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- "A Greener Watford starts with greener ways of getting around. Cars aren't the only option." – [Peter Taylor](#), Mayor of Watford.
- "Not everyone can drive or has a car, but everyone can use the train – that's why I support World Car Free Day." – Barbara Rochelle, Stone station volunteer.
- "Rail is one of the greenest forms of travel... being able to work on the move is really important to me." – [Yvonne Fox-Burmbury](#), [Transport Focus](#).

## Smart Investments

We want to ensure that our stations and depots are future-proofed and minimise their impact on the environment. By integrating energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy solutions, and climate-resilient infrastructure, we ensure our stations and depots are future-proofed while reducing environmental impact. These investments not only support the **UK's Net Zero ambitions** but also enhance passenger experience and operational reliability. Some of our smart investments include:

- Rolling out our modern electric Class 730/2 train fleets which improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions, and enhance passenger experience. These upgrades also align with decarbonisation targets and modal shift goals.
- Renewable Energy Integration: Solar PV installations at our depots (so far including Tyseley and Bletchley Depots) to reduce Scope 2 emissions (indirect emissions from sites where energy purchased by our business is produced) and support the UK's Net Zero transition.
- Data-Driven Asset Management: Using analytics for real-time monitoring of energy, water, and waste performance across stations and depots.

## Operational Efficiency

By optimising resources, reducing waste, and leveraging technology, we are building a network that is resilient, inclusive, and sustainable for the long term. Our approach links carbon reduction, smarter asset management, and workforce development to outcomes that matter for people and places:

- Carbon Reduction for Cleaner Communities - In 2025, we supported aims to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions by optimising heating, cooling, and lighting systems in stations and depots—helping improve local air quality and reduce climate impacts.
- Smarter Asset Management for Reliability - Predictive maintenance and smart monitoring reduce downtime, extend asset life, and ensure passengers experience a more reliable, stress-free journey.
- Energy-Efficient Fleet for Lower Carbon Travel - Through regenerative braking, eco-driving systems, and real-time performance monitoring, we are cutting energy use and emissions while improving affordability and service quality.
- Timetable Optimisation for Better Journeys - Robust timetables reduce delays, improve reliability, and enhance energy efficiency—supporting better resource allocation and improving passenger satisfaction.

## 6. Our Partnerships

### Sustainable Procurement and Innovation

We are committed to managing the environmental, social, and economic impacts of our operations through sustainable procurement, supplier engagement and responsible supply chain practices.

In 2025, we:

- Encouraged suppliers to adopt proactive sustainability practices and share their environmental policies.
- Embedded sustainability criteria into tender assessments for significant procurements.
- Supported local, regional, and SME suppliers, maintaining at least 20% of addressable spend with SMEs and social enterprises.
- Prioritised low-carbon transport options, such as leasing hybrid and electric vehicles.

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- Applied ethical business practices and consider whole-life costs in purchasing decisions.

**Over 70%** of contracts were awarded to small and medium sized enterprises, generating a total of **£3.74million** in social value.

Innovation is central to creating a railway that is sustainable, efficient, and future-ready. Through close collaboration with suppliers, we are co-creating solutions that enhance performance and reduce environmental impact. Our Supply Chain Charter, co-developed with our partners, sets shared principles for sustainability, ethics, and innovation. Alongside this, our newly launched Supply Chain Forum provides a collaborative space to strengthen relationships, align priorities, and support local economies. It acts as a hub for knowledge sharing and idea generation—enabling technologies to be tested and best practices scaled across our network.

## Collaboration for Meaningful Change

Meaningful engagement with our stakeholders and customers is essential to creating a railway that works for everyone. Throughout 2025, we created spaces for dialogue—through inclusive forums, regular meetings, and collaborative projects—ensuring decisions reflected real community needs and delivered benefits beyond transport.

In our 2025 stakeholder survey, **88%** of respondents said that we build **strong stakeholder relationships**, with 81% describing us as a good collaborator.

Our annual stakeholder conference was attended by over **120** people, providing opportunities to hear from senior leaders about our business plans and to discuss the issues facing the wider industry.

Working with our Stakeholder Equality Group we have been able to incorporate feedback on lived experiences of passengers with disabilities into station design, service planning and inclusive communications.

Last year we brought together industry partners with representatives from our security, safety and sustainability teams at our first 'Keeping it Simple... to be secure, safe and sustainable' conference to collaborate, innovate, share knowledge and solve problems. The conference achieved over **£281,000 in social value** — helping to embed safer practices, strengthen environmental responsibility and build a more resilient and sustainable network.

By embedding collaboration into everything we do, we can deliver a railway that is not only efficient but socially responsible—creating tangible benefits such as improved accessibility, safer journeys, and stronger community partnerships.

## 7. Conclusion

The results of our 2025 Social Value Report reflect our commitment to putting people first. It also provides a mechanism to identify opportunities to go further.

In 2026, we are building on this foundation with key priorities, including:

- Diversifying our workforce to reflect the communities we serve.
- Driving deeper carbon reductions to support a cleaner, greener future.
- Improving operational performance for more reliable journeys.
- Strengthening stakeholder and customer engagement to ensure every voice is heard.

Work is already underway to turn these ambitions into action—creating a railway that is inclusive, sustainable, and designed around the needs of people and places.

Want to share your thoughts or learn more? Contact us at [stakeholders@wmtrains.co.uk](mailto:stakeholders@wmtrains.co.uk).