

CrossCountry Sustainability Strategy

...beyond the Journey
2025



crosscountry 

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As a long-distance train operator, sustainability is not just a part of what we do - it is central to our purpose. Every day, our services connect people to places across the UK, offering one of the lowest-carbon forms of travel available. This unique position gives us both a responsibility and an opportunity: to deliver transport solutions that are not only efficient and reliable, but also socially and environmentally sustainable.

We recognise that we're on a journey. Over the past few years, we've laid the foundations, from strengthening our understanding of emissions and waste, to embedding Social Value across our operations and communities.

Built around our three core pillars - People, Places, Planet - this strategy is shaped by the issues that matter most to our customers, colleagues, and communities. It focuses on what we must do now to ensure our railway remains resilient and relevant tomorrow; from decarbonising our fleet and conserving biodiversity, to empowering communities and supporting an inclusive workforce.

Our vision for sustainability is to give more than we take away, by acting as a catalyst for positive change across the regions we serve. At CrossCountry we don't just stop here - our purpose goes beyond running trains and calling at stations. We aim to be a driver of regeneration, inclusion and innovation. We are reimagining what a railway can deliver for society. This strategy is not just about doing less harm - it's about doing more good.

At CrossCountry, *we don't just stop here*, we go beyond the Journey.



#1



OUR THREE PILLARS

CrossCountry's Sustainability Strategy is built around three core pillars: People, Places and Planet. These pillars represent the areas where we have the greatest opportunity and responsibility to create positive, lasting impact.

This structure is the result of careful thought and collaboration. We designed our strategy not just to meet environmental goals, but to deliver meaningful benefits for everyone connected to our railway - from our colleagues and customers to the communities we serve and the environment we all rely on.

Within each of our three Sustainability Pillars we have identified specific modules that help us focus our efforts and resources where they matter most. These modules break down complex sustainability challenges into targeted areas of action, allowing us to track current progress, detail our short-term plan, and outline our long-term ambition. By working through each module, we ensure that our strategy is both practical and focused, addressing the issues most material to our business and to the communities we serve.

Importantly, our three Pillars are guided by the topics set out in the RSSB Sustainable Rail Blueprint, ensuring that our approach remains aligned with industry best practice and national rail sustainability objectives.

Together, these pillars form a clear, practical and ambitious plan - one that puts people at the heart of progress, ensures our operations support local communities, and secures the long-term health of the environment we all share.



PEOPLE

Be a positive force for our employees and wider society

Our Focus Areas

We create an inclusive and diverse workforce, offering lifelong learning

We open social mobility and access to opportunities

We promote holistic health and wellbeing



PLACES

Support sustainable community growth across our regions

Our Focus Areas

We empower communities with lasting Social Value

We create connected journeys and a strong sense of place

We protect the natural environment and build resilience



PLANET

Reduce the environmental footprint of our operation

Our Focus Areas

We reduce emissions from our operations

We apply the waste hierarchy to conserve resources

We embed circular and sustainable operations

Aligning our priorities

A major step in shaping the direction of this work was our 2025 materiality assessment, which brought together insights from across the business and beyond to identify the most important issues for our people, our stakeholders and our future. The findings from this process directly informed our priorities, ensuring this strategy reflects the things that truly matter. Further detail on this materiality assessment can be found in the next section.

Our strategy is aligned with the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), ensuring our actions reflect the latest climate science. We have set near-term science-based targets that define the pathway we must follow to 2035. This includes a commitment to reduce our Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 63% by 2035, alongside driving meaningful progress across our wider value chain. These targets provide a clear benchmark for progress, measurable goals for accountability, and a defined trajectory toward delivering a low-carbon future.

We know the challenge is significant, but so is our potential for impact. Through this strategy, we aim to lead by example, creating long-term value for society while delivering a better railway for everyone.

Materiality

To ensure our 2025 Sustainability Strategy reflects the issues that matter most, we carried out a comprehensive materiality assessment in 2025. This process brought together colleagues, experts and stakeholders to identify, evaluate and prioritise the sustainability topics with the greatest significance to CrossCountry's operations, communities, and long-term success.

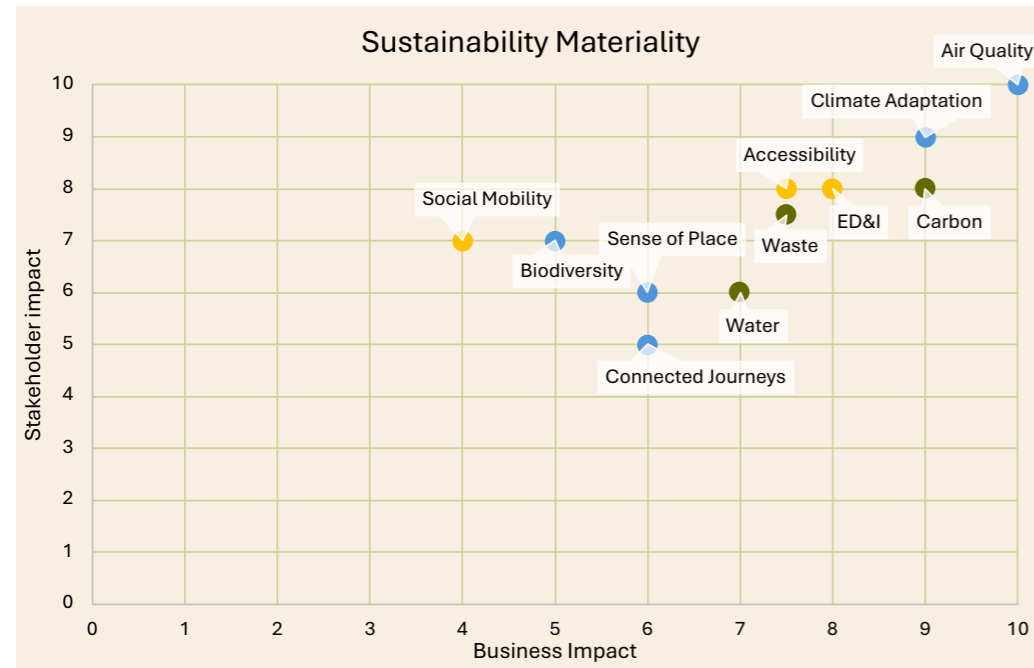
The assessment focused on two key dimensions:

- **Organisational impact** – how significantly a topic affects our ability to create value or meet regulatory, operational, or reputational risks.
- **Stakeholder importance** – how much the topic matters to our customers, colleagues, communities, and partners.

Each potential topic was scored and mapped using a materiality matrix, helping us to determine which areas should be given particular focus and attention within our Sustainability Strategy. The result is a clear and evidence-based focus on the most material issues across our three sustainability pillars: People, Places and Planet.

The outcomes of the assessment also helped us identify gaps, align our approach with stakeholder expectations, and ensure that our actions deliver the most meaningful impact.

By taking a structured and inclusive approach to materiality, we have built a Sustainability Strategy that is not only ambitious, but also relevant, targeted and accountable.



#2



PEOPLE

Our people are at the heart of everything we do. From the colleagues who deliver our services each day to the customers and communities we serve across the country, we know that our role as a train operator is about more than transport. We have the chance to make a meaningful difference in people's lives, and we are committed to doing exactly that.

But ***we don't just stop here***. Our commitment goes beyond our own teams. We are opening doors for the next generation through outreach, apprenticeships and opportunities. We are working to improve social mobility by removing barriers and creating pathways into rail careers, particularly for those from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds.

We want everyone who interacts with CrossCountry to feel the benefit of a people-first approach. Whether it's a young person discovering a new career path or a colleague developing new skills, we are creating opportunities that grow potential and build resilience.

Putting people first is not a standalone goal, it is the foundation for everything we aim to achieve. Because when our people succeed, so does our railway, and so does the impact we have on the world around us.

Through our People Pillar, we focus on three key areas: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) & Wellbeing; Social Mobility and Safeguarding; and Accessibility. These modules work together to ensure that our workforce is representative.



#2a

EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (ED&I) AND WELLBEING

Creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive culture

At CrossCountry, we recognise that fairness is not about treating everyone the same - it's about ensuring everyone has what they need to succeed. That's why we are placing equity at the centre of our approach to diversity and inclusion.

As a national train operator, we serve a wide range of communities across England, Scotland and Wales. To truly represent and support the people who rely on us, our workforce must reflect the diversity of the regions we operate in, and our culture must actively remove the barriers that prevent individuals from reaching their full potential.

This module is about creating an environment where differences are valued and inclusion is embedded in how we operate. It means inclusive leadership, fair processes, and ensuring colleagues from all backgrounds have the opportunity to thrive. From recruitment and development to employee voice and data-driven decision-making, we are working to build a culture of belonging at every level.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is not a project with an end date, it's a long-term commitment to fairness, representation and respect. By putting equity at the heart of how we lead and grow, we are building a stronger business and a railway that works better for everyone.

Our 12 Month Update

In the past year, we've taken important steps to build a more inclusive workplace and lay the foundations for long-term change. We introduced blind recruitment processes to reduce bias, partnered with organisations like WORK180 to attract more women to the business, and continued to collaborate with the Multicultural Apprenticeship & Skills Alliance to support talent from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Internally, we expanded our ED&I Forum, launched awareness campaigns aligned to national inclusion events, and began designing a behavioural framework that defines what inclusion should look and feel like at CrossCountry. Through the ED&I forum, we enabled colleagues to display their pronouns on Microsoft Teams, helping to create a more respectful and inclusive working environment.

We have launched awareness campaigns aligned with national inclusion events, such as National Inclusion Week, to ensure our efforts are tailored and appropriate to wider UK activity.

We also made improvements to how we collect and understand colleague data, preparing for a broader campaign to better measure the diversity of our workforce and the experiences of our people.

Our short-term plan (by March 2029)

Vision: We will build a workplace that reflects the diversity of modern Britain - where colleagues feel safe, valued and able to thrive, and where equity is embedded in leadership, systems and decision-making.

To bring this vision to life, CrossCountry has laid out a clear and ambitious plan for ED&I. This work is guided by four key objectives: defining and embedding an inclusive culture, promoting inclusive leadership, ensuring fair recruitment opportunities, and measuring our progress with insight and integrity.

and progression

We are focused on embedding inclusion into the core of how we operate. Our vision is to build a workplace that reflects the diversity of modern Britain and enables all colleagues to thrive. We will complete the rollout of our ED&I behavioural framework, making it a central part of recruitment, performance development reviews and leadership development.

We are designing new training programmes for leaders, improving how we measure inclusion across functions and regions, and setting KPIs to track progress in gender and ethnic representation at all levels. Our ED&I Forum will evolve, and we will explore the creation of Employee Resource Groups to amplify lived experiences and target specific challenges. We will also undergo our first EDI Maturity Model assessment to benchmark our progress against national and industry standards.

We will continue the development and implementation of Diversity Monitoring, building maturity in both data analysis and reporting so that we can better understand our workforce and identify where progress is needed. In order to meet our targets, we will also launch a campaign to support data collection across ED&I metrics with existing staff, ensuring that our insights are comprehensive and meaningful. At the same time, we will support our recruitment team to increase accessibility and inclusiveness across recruitment policy and practice, embedding fairness at every stage of the colleague journey.

As part of our commitment to inclusion, we are developing a new CrossCountry uniform that reflects the diversity of our workforce and respects individual identity. Following extensive feedback from colleagues across the business, the redesign process is being shaped by what our people want and need, ensuring the new uniform is comfortable, practical and inclusive for all body types, cultures and personal styles.

The aim is to create a uniform that not only meets operational needs but also fosters a sense of pride and belonging. By listening to our colleagues and involving them in the process, we are embedding equity and respect into something as every day, yet as personal, as what we wear to work.

Key Deliverables

- We will achieve at least 40% female representation in leadership roles (Level 5 and people managers) by 2027.
- We will ensure that at least 10% of all driver applications come from women by 2026.
- We will increase the proportion of underrepresented minorities (focusing on ethnicity and disability) in leadership roles by 10% by 2027, compared to a 2025 baseline.
- We will improve colleague survey scores on “all employees are treated equally” to 78% in 2025 and 80% in 2026 (from 77% in 2024).
- We will increase colleague survey scores on “I feel I can be myself at work” to 75% in 2025 and 80% in 2026 (new measure introduced in 2025).
- We will improve disclosure rates of diversity data, setting a baseline in 2026 and achieving a 10% increase by 2027.

Our long-term plan (2035)

By 2035, we aim to be a recognised leader in workplace inclusion across the UK transport sector. ED&I will be fully embedded in our culture, systems and services - not as an initiative, but as a way of operating. Our workforce will reflect the full diversity of the communities we serve, and inclusive leadership will be second nature across the business.

We will have matured our use of demographic and experience data to target interventions and track change. Our recruitment, marketing and digital platforms will be fully accessible and representative, and our colleague networks will play a key role in shaping strategy. We will influence ED&I practices across the rail industry through partnerships and thought leadership, proving that inclusive businesses are better for people, better for performance, and better for society.

To celebrate and quantify our success, we will achieve formally recognised accreditations at platinum level.



#2b



SOCIAL MOBILITY & SAFEGUARDING

Creating opportunities for all

At CrossCountry, we know that access to opportunity can transform lives, and as a national train operator, we are in a powerful position to help make that happen. Our Social Mobility and Safeguarding Module is about protecting people, supporting communities, and opening doors to brighter futures.

Social mobility is central to how we think about our role, our impact and our responsibility. Our network spans regions with some of the highest levels of inequality in the UK, where limited access to education, employment and safe spaces can leave individuals, particularly young people, vulnerable to harmful influences such as County Lines exploitation. That's why we see safeguarding and social mobility as deeply connected: by creating better opportunities within rail, we can help reduce the risk of people falling into unsafe situations, while giving them the skills, careers and confidence to succeed.

Through this module, we are breaking down barriers and creating access to the railway as a place to build skills, find meaningful work and grow. From schools outreach and early careers programmes to apprenticeships, internships and inclusive recruitment, we are ensuring that talent and ambition are given a home at CrossCountry. For us, this is not about one-off opportunities, but about building a system that recognises and removes disadvantage at every level. In doing so, we are building a railway that protects, empowers and serves society in the broadest and most inclusive sense.

Our 12 Month Update

In the past year, we have made meaningful progress in using our national footprint to open doors for individuals and communities who face barriers to employment. Through our partnership with The Schools Outreach Company, we have engaged with over 400 schools across the UK, focusing on those with higher-than-average free school meals and BAME representation, to raise awareness of careers in rail and promote greater access to opportunity. This partnership continues to grow in 2025, with increased face-to-face engagement through careers fairs, assemblies and school visits.



In September 2025 we were delighted to welcome our next group of King's Trust young people to the business. Over three weeks, the cohort completed the 'Get into Customer Service Programme' – a collaboration between CrossCountry, WMT and Avanti. Over the last five years we have supported young people back into work, education or further training.

Apprenticeships remain central to our approach. For the second year running, we have been recognised as a Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer by the Department for Education, rising from rank 94 in 2023 to 79 in 2024 and 59 in 2025. Over 20% of our workforce are either currently enrolled or have completed an apprenticeship, spanning Level 2 through Level 4+ programmes. We remain committed to expanding both the number of employees undertaking apprenticeships and the breadth of opportunities on offer.

This commitment has been further recognised through our GOLD accreditation from Investors in People – We Invest in Apprentices. The assessment highlighted our strategic focus, high-quality support and culture of continuous improvement. Feedback praised our passion and drive to deliver exceptional programmes, with one standout comment noting that “You have clearly invested time and money in people to ensure apprentices have the best possible experience and your retention and pass rate is testament to this”.

We are also proud to have achieved GOLD status for two consecutive years from The 5% Club, recognising our strong focus on workplace training and development.

We continue to develop our Early Careers Strategy, engaging with local education providers to build a dedicated pipeline for school leavers. This includes introducing specialised apprenticeships, such as finance, and embedding structured development modules into our graduate programme - helping more young people begin meaningful, long-term careers in rail.

In Plymouth, we partnered with Primary Engineer to run a STEM-focused event for children from nine local schools, with support from colleagues across CrossCountry. The programme saw pupils build vehicles to a set specification before testing them through challenges such as load-hauling. Our Regional Director and our Fleet & Engineering Director joined as judges, recognising effort, creativity and problem-solving skills.

Alongside the competition, our Fleet & Engineering Director shared real-world insights into how engineers design for efficiency - considering energy use, material choices and the need to optimise resources. By opening up the world of rail engineering to young people, we are helping to spark interest in STEM careers, broaden future opportunities, and build the next generation of talent across the communities we serve.

We renewed our strategic partnership with the Railway Children Foundation for another 12 months, and completed five roadshows through this partnership, supporting our safeguarding deliverables. As a result of our work and following a rigorous audit, we have been awarded our annual certification for Safeguarding. We were also awarded White Ribbon accreditation until 2027, recognising our work to prevent violence and intimidation against women and girls, and tackle unwanted sexual behaviour. By embedding safeguarding into our operations and community work, we are not only protecting individuals in the moment, we are actively removing barriers that prevent vulnerable people from engaging with opportunity.

Our short-term plan (by March 2029)

Vision: We will create clearer, fairer pathways into rail by expanding outreach, early careers and development programmes, particularly in underserved communities. Our Social Mobility Framework will guide strategic investment across our regions.

We will formalise a Social Mobility framework, aligning our outreach and recruitment with data on regional needs. Our recruitment campaigns will continue to focus on broadening access, and we will embed social mobility considerations into how we evaluate suppliers, community investment and volunteering.

This framework will also be used to support a more strategic and impact-driven approach to our Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF), ensuring that funding is directed towards projects that align with our social mobility priorities and deliver measurable benefits for underserved communities.

We will also capture data on the percentage of engaged students who pursue a career with CrossCountry, or within the wider rail context.

Key Deliverables

The work within our Social Mobility Module will support our deliverables in the ED&I and Accessibility module, by increasing the profile and brand awareness of CrossCountry in target locations.

- We will deliver our Schools Outreach Programme at 100% in 2026.
- We will increase attraction and engagement from female students.
- We will drive wider exposure and engagement from underrepresented ethnic minorities.
- We will support schools with high levels of social deprivation and free school meal (FSM) eligibility, helping to increase social mobility.
- We will provide greater and more detailed reporting on our outreach activity at a UK-wide level.

Our long-term plan (2035)

Our ambition is to create a railway where background is no barrier to opportunity, and where our workforce is built from the communities we serve.

We will have developed a nationwide network of educational and community partnerships that fuel our talent pipeline. Our long-standing success with apprenticeships will continue to grow, offering high-quality, supported routes into long-term careers in rail. We will measure the impact of our social mobility work through robust data and human stories, and we will be using our scale to support regional economic growth and resilience.

Our leadership teams will include individuals whose lived experience reflects the full social spectrum, and we will actively work to dismantle systemic barriers that hold people back. We believe the power of rail is not just in where it takes you, but in what it can unlock. Through long-term commitment to social mobility, we will make sure CrossCountry is not just moving people, but moving society forward. Because at CrossCountry, **we don't just stop here.**



In November 2024, the first cohort of our Mental Health First Aiders got together for a workshop to learn, share ideas and discuss how to make this vital role work for us all.



#2c



ACCESSIBILITY

Making rail accessible to everyone

At CrossCountry, accessibility is about more than compliance, it's about creating a railway that everyone can use with confidence and independence. We are committed to removing barriers across our services, from stations and platforms to trains, websites and digital tools, so that all customers and colleagues feel supported and included.

This commitment means uplifting our digital platforms to meet WCAG standards, incorporating British Sign Language into our communications, and running awareness campaigns that highlight accessibility needs on the railway.

Accessibility is also material to our business. Passenger assist requests are growing by 20% year on year, reflecting both rising demand and higher expectations. Customers rightly expect rail travel to be inclusive.

Through these actions, we will improve customer experience, reduce inequalities and contribute to social value by making rail a more inclusive mode of transport. Accessibility also reflects our core values of respect and care, embedding equity into the way we operate and ensuring that no one is excluded from the opportunities and connections that rail travel provides.

Our 12 Month Update

In the last year, we have made strong progress in improving accessibility across our network. We unveiled the Newport Access Map, highlighting attractions and accessible routes around one of our station areas. We completed the full rollout of British Sign Language across our website, extending access beyond key pages to the entire site. To make passenger assistance smoother, we introduced luggage tags for customers requiring additional support, enabling quicker and easier identification for staff. We also attended Naidex and Sight Village, coordinating transport for customers and building stronger links with the accessibility community.

Our short-term plan (by March 2029)

Vision: Accessibility will be fully embedded and thought-leading, ensuring every customer can travel with confidence. From digital platforms to on-board services, our approach will go beyond compliance, removing barriers and creating inclusive journeys for all.

By March 2029, our focus is on practical solutions that make journeys more inclusive and dignified for customers with accessibility needs. We will introduce Priority E-Cards, enabling customers who require additional support to carry an identifying card that encourages other passengers to give way and creates smoother boarding experiences.

Alongside this, we will launch three-in-one accessible catering menus, available in British Sign Language, Braille, and large print formats, ensuring all customers have equal access to on-board services. These initiatives will be supported by ongoing improvements to staff training and customer communications, ensuring that accessibility becomes a visible and embedded part of the CrossCountry journey.

To ensure our suppliers are equipped to meet our needs, we will embed accessibility into relevant tenders. This will ensure we are futureproofing our supply chain to meet modern needs.

Key Deliverables

- We will launch our Priority E-Cards programme by 2027.
- We will ensure accessible catering menus (including BSL, Braille, and Large Print) are available by 2027

Our Long-Term Plan (2035)

By 2035, we want accessibility to be fully embedded into every aspect of CrossCountry's operations and culture, ensuring that travel by rail is inclusive, dignified and seamless for all customers. Our ambition is not only to meet statutory requirements but to lead the rail industry in setting new standards of accessibility.

By 2035, accessibility will not be a separate strand of our strategy but a natural part of how we operate, measured through consistently high satisfaction ratings from customers, significantly reduced accessibility complaints, and industry recognition for best practice in inclusive travel.

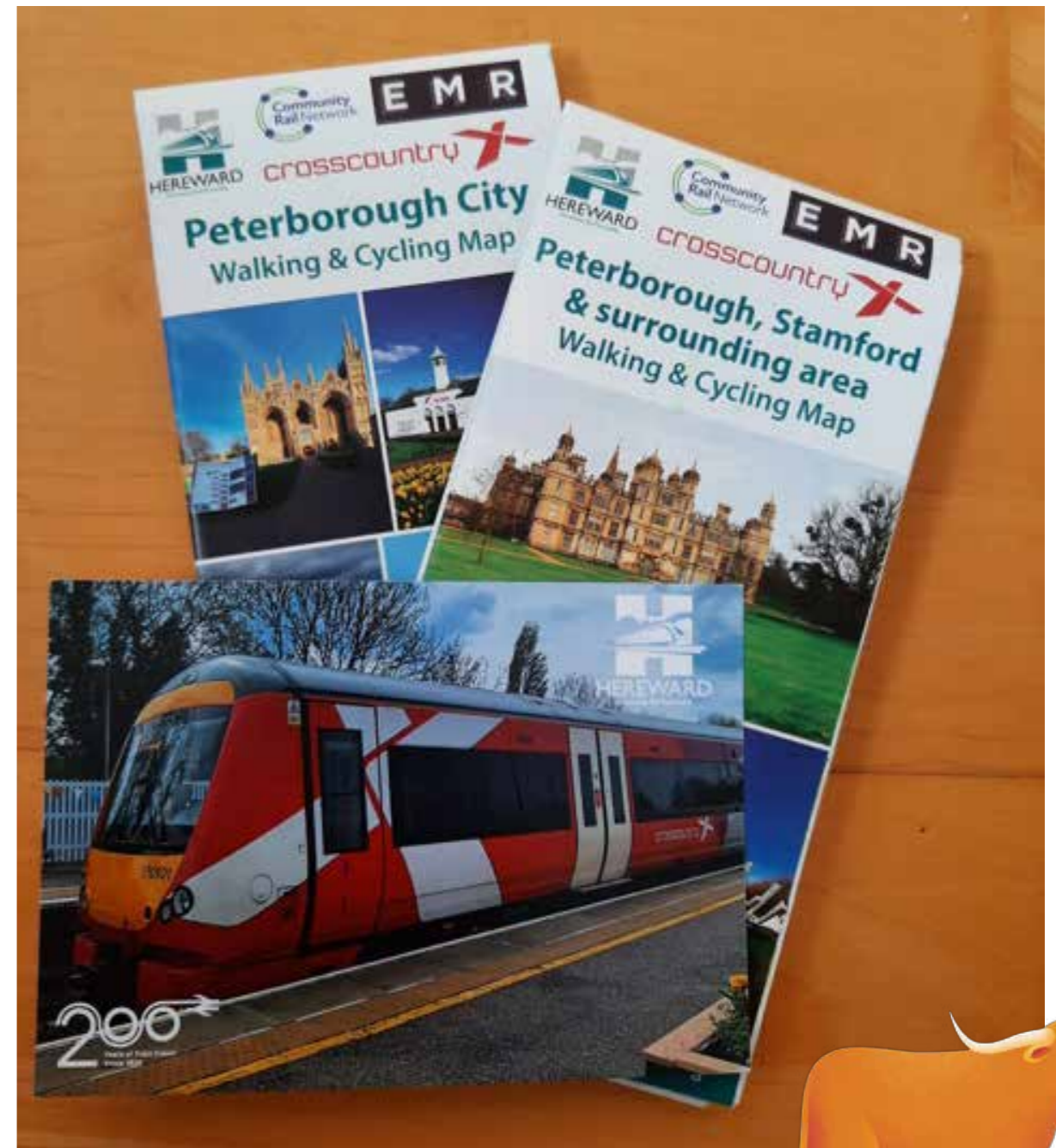
#3



PLACES

At CrossCountry, we are more than a train operator. With 111 stations on our network, we are the most geographically diverse operator in the UK. This gives us a unique connection to communities across the country, from major cities to rural regions. It also gives us a responsibility to protect the environments we pass through and support the people who live there.

The Places pillar of our Sustainability Strategy reflects this responsibility. We are committed to improving the health, wellbeing and resilience of local areas. This part of our strategy is shaped around five key areas: Air Quality; Climate Change Adaptation; Biodiversity; Sense of Place; and Connected Journeys. Each one plays a vital role in ensuring that the places we serve continue to thrive in the years ahead.



#3a



AIR QUALITY

Improving air quality across our network

At CrossCountry, we understand that our services affect the environments and communities we pass through. While we do not directly manage the infrastructure at the stations we serve, we recognise that our diesel-powered fleet contributes to local air pollution, particularly at enclosed stations where pollutants can accumulate.

Air quality, and its link to public health, is a priority material sustainability topic for us. As such, we have developed a dedicated Diesel Engine Exhaust Emissions (DEEE) Strategy to identify, manage and reduce the risks associated with our operations. This strategy is reviewed and updated annually, helping us to track progress and shape new interventions. It forms the foundation of our wider commitment to improving local air quality across our network.

Our 12 Month Update

Over the past year, we have made meaningful progress in improving air quality through both operational changes and targeted monitoring.

We introduced a revised Engine Shut Down Policy that reduces idling from 15 minutes to 5 minutes in some instances. This change has been implemented to specifically target enclosed stations. Our collaboration with the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) suggests this policy could improve local air quality by up to 7.3% percent, by removing approximately 0.58 tonnes of nitrogen oxides (NOx). To ensure accountability and assess effectiveness, we worked closely with Network Rail to carry out enhanced monitoring of shut-down compliance at Birmingham New Street, one of the busiest enclosed stations on our network.

We also created our new Monitoring and Managing Air Quality Policy, which outlines our approach to managing the health and safety risks associated with diesel exhaust exposure.

Our short-term plan (by March 2029)

Vision: We will reduce local air pollution through improved operational practices and engine technology, and work with partners to protect health and wellbeing in and around enclosed stations.

Over the next three years, we are focused on reducing emissions at their source. Our main priority is the installation of Intelligent Engine Stop Start (IESS) technology across our Voyager fleet. By the end of October 2025, we will have completed the full rollout. Initial forecasts suggest that IESS will allow up to 25 percent of engines to shut down on approach to Birmingham New Street, reducing pollutants released during platform dwell time.

Looking beyond this, we are progressing the development of IESS+, a more advanced version of the system that could allow up to 40 percent of engines to shut down on the approach to appropriate stations.

We continue to work closely with the RSSB as part of the T1358 study to understand the air quality benefits of hydro-treated vegetable oil (HVO). We know that under the current operational constraints, it is likely that blended HVO would be the only feasible option for CrossCountry, and therefore we are also commissioning additional work to explore the use of blended fuels as a pathway to lower-emission operations.

At the same time, we are conducting feasibility studies on our Turbostar fleet, including consideration of innovative transmission, and shore supply to reduce diesel consumption and associated emissions at depots.

All of this work will feed into the development of a new rolling stock proposal, which will form the basis of our case for long-term fleet renewal.

Key Deliverables

- We will work with Network Rail and station operators, to improve local air quality in priority stations by at least 20% by 2027 compared to 2022 levels.
- We will roll out IESS by October 2025, and create a business case for IESS+ by December 2025, subject to funding.

Our long-term plan (2035)

Our long-term ambition is clear: to significantly reduce and eventually eliminate the impact of diesel emissions on local air quality across our network.

By December 2025, we will outline indicative costs for a new fleet that meets the latest environmental and emissions standards. Subject to funding, we will roll out this fleet by March 2035 in order to reduce our CO₂e emissions by 63% from our FY2024 baseline, in line with our Science Based Targets.

We will continue to work with RSSB to monitor air quality at stations, and tailor our approaches accordingly.



#3b



BIODIVERSITY

Enhancing the natural environment

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on Earth – the ecosystems, species and natural processes that support the planet and sustain human wellbeing. From pollinators and plants to soils and waterways, biodiversity underpins the health of our environment and contributes to clean air, food security and climate resilience.

For CrossCountry, biodiversity is a material issue due to the nature of our network. Our services run through diverse landscapes, including green corridors, rural areas and urban environments where natural habitats are increasingly under pressure. As the most geographically diverse UK train operator, we have a responsibility to protect the ecosystems we pass through and to contribute to the restoration of nature where possible.

We also recognise that our wider value chain can both depend on and impact biodiversity. Supply chains for materials, energy, food and infrastructure all rely on healthy ecosystems, from fertile soils that support agriculture to forests that provide raw materials and wetlands that regulate water quality. Declines in biodiversity can disrupt these systems, leading to increased costs, reduced resilience and risks to long-term supply. That is why protecting and enhancing biodiversity is not only an environmental priority, but also a way of safeguarding the stability and sustainability of the resources we and our partners depend on.

Our 12 Month Update

Over the past year, we have taken important steps to understand and reduce our impact on biodiversity. We worked with Network Rail to make use of their State of Nature Report, which maps the biodiversity units across the national rail estate. This analysis has helped us better understand where our activities may have a negative impact on wildlife or habitat quality and allowed us to prioritise where action is needed most.

Guided by this insight, we invested £80,000 in biodiversity improvement projects across the UK. Through partnerships with stakeholders and local organisations, we supported ten separate initiatives aimed at restoring natural habitats, enhancing green spaces and protecting native species along our network. These projects reflect our commitment to turning knowledge into action and using data to guide investment where it will have the greatest impact.

We also continued our partnership with Green The UK to support the Lias Line project in the West Midlands. This initiative improves biodiversity alongside a disused rail corridor and actively promotes sustainable travel by integrating green spaces with cycling and walking infrastructure. The Lias Line represents the type of multi-benefit project we aim to support – one that enhances nature, connects communities and encourages low-carbon transport alternatives. We have also volunteered on this project, to dedicate time to hand-on conservation activities.



Our short-term plan (by March 2029)

Vision: We will align our investments with biodiversity data, supporting projects that restore habitats, protect species and enhance the natural environment across our regions.

In the years ahead, we plan to take a more integrated and strategic approach to biodiversity. Our Social Mobility framework and wider Sustainability Strategy will play an important role in shaping how we invest, ensuring our projects reflect both environmental priorities and the needs of the communities we serve.

We will continue to work closely with Network Rail to understand land use, habitat connectivity and environmental conditions around our infrastructure. Our shared ambition is to achieve no net loss of biodiversity across our network. This means that wherever we make changes to our operations, infrastructure or services, we will ensure the natural environment is left in the same or better condition than before.

We will continue our Biodiversity Improvement Projects scheme, to support hands on conservation across our network subject to funding. Our focus will be on targeted, local action with measurable results. We will support community-led biodiversity projects, embed ecological thinking into planning and procurement, and continue using Network Rail's data as a foundation for decision-making.

We will use the strength of our supply chain to responsibly manage and enhance biodiversity. By working with our suppliers, we will identify opportunities to protect natural habitats, restore ecosystems, and increase biodiversity units across our network. Our approach will align with our wider goal to reduce environmental impacts and build long-term resilience.

Key Deliverables

- Embed Social Value principles into our Biodiversity Improvement Projects Fund, by April 2026
- Map our impact on Biodiversity, to inform annual investment back into our regions, by December 2025



Our dedicated Project manager opens the Woodland Walk at Wingfield Station, funded by the CCIF Fund and part of our ongoing Biodiversity Strategy.



CrossCountry volunteers dedicate time to woodland management in Battram Wood, Leicestershire.

Our long-term plan (2035)

By 2035, we want biodiversity to be seen not as an environmental add-on, but as a natural part of how we operate and invest. Our vision is to create positive biodiversity outcomes across the regions we serve by restoring damaged ecosystems, increasing native habitat, and turning railway land into spaces that support both nature and people.

We will measure our long-term success not just by the number of projects we fund, but by the improvements we help deliver in biodiversity unit scores across the network. We will use this data to ensure accountability and guide future investment.

Collaboration will be central to this. We will work with partners, local communities and our supply chain to deliver projects that enhance habitats, protect species and embed biodiversity considerations into procurement and operations. By engaging our suppliers, we can influence land use, sourcing practices and material choices, ensuring that biodiversity is valued and protected throughout our value chain.

Through sustained action and shared responsibility, we aim to make CrossCountry part of the solution to biodiversity loss. Our railway will not only connect people and places -it will connect landscapes, protect wildlife, and support a healthier natural environment for generations to come.

#3c



Climate Change Adaptation

Preparing our business for climate change

Climate change is one of the most significant challenges facing transport today. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events and shifting seasonal patterns are already disrupting infrastructure, services and supply chains. For the rail industry, adapting to climate change is not a distant concern, it is a present and growing risk.

By investing in climate adaptation, we ensure that our services remain safe, reliable and punctual, even when conditions are challenging. This protects the journeys that our customers rely on every day and avoids costly disruption to the wider transport system. Strengthening our approach also helps to prevent damage to rolling stock and infrastructure, which can be expensive to repair and use finite resources.

Building resilience into our infrastructure and operations means we are better equipped to manage risks before they escalate. It allows us to identify vulnerabilities, act early, and reduce the likelihood of major incidents that could affect both customers and colleagues. In doing so, we help safeguard passenger and worker safety - ensuring that everyone who travels or works with us is protected.

Finally, effective climate adaptation underpins customer confidence and satisfaction. When our services run smoothly despite challenging conditions, it reassures customers that they can depend on us. It demonstrates that we are proactive, and committed to keeping people moving no matter what the climate brings.

Our 12 Month Update

Over the past year, we have continued to support Network Rail in developing and rolling out tools and initiatives that strengthen the railway's resilience to extreme weather. The GUSTO system (Gales: Use of Speed-restrictions Targeted Operational Risk) has been expanded, helping to reduce the impact of high winds by targeting speed restrictions only where necessary. In the Western region, this has meant restrictions as short as three miles during the 2024 storm season, compared to more than fifty miles under traditional approaches.

In the Central region, Flood Attenuation Bladders (FAB) have been introduced as a rapid-deployment solution for small to medium flood events, with colleague familiarisation sessions planned for October. Further catchment modelling is also underway at Clay Cross and Draycott in the East Midlands, giving better insight into water flow and identifying potential interventions.

The rollout of PRIMA (Proportionate Risk Response to Implementing Mitigating Speeds to Assets) has continued, allowing more refined speed restrictions by assessing rainfall impacts and railhead conditions, while the Drone ARB system has been expanded to improve vegetation management across the network. Together, these measures are helping us build a railway that is more responsive, adaptive and prepared for the challenges of a changing climate.

Our short-term plan (by March 2029)

Vision: We will publish and implement an annual Climate Adaptation Strategy tailored to our regions, using data and risk assessments to improve resilience across our operations and protect services from extreme weather.

In the near term, our focus is to establish a clear and practical approach to climate risk. We are developing a Weather Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation (WRCCA) Strategy, using RSSB's national guidance as a foundation and adapting it to the specific operational needs of CrossCountry.

This strategy will identify key regional climate risks such as flooding, heat-related infrastructure strain, and storm damage. It will also outline the actions we need to take to prepare our network, people and processes for a future where disruption caused by extreme weather is more frequent and more severe.

A key part of our approach to weather resilience will include upskilling our staff, using Network Rail's 'Weather Academy'. This will develop the vital skills required to interpret forecasts and make better operational decisions, such as when and where to slow trains in stormy conditions.

We will collaborate and support infrastructure managers, such as Network Rail and Station Operators, in making significant improvements to drainage systems and the management of water on third party land and install CCTV at high-risk flooding sites, to enable better and faster responses.

Key Deliverables

- We will produce a Weather Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, by January 2026.
- We will embed Climate Change Adaptation thinking into key procurement activity .

Our long-term plan (2035)

By 2035, we aim to be recognised as a leader in climate adaptation within the rail industry. This means not only protecting our operation from disruption but rethinking how we design, plan and deliver services in a changing world.

We will take a region-specific approach to climate resilience, recognising that the risks faced in the South West differ from those in the North East or the Midlands. Our long-term plan is to embed climate data into our decision-making processes, using insights to inform fleet planning, operational protocols and future infrastructure investment. We will also embed climate adaptation measures into procurement, ensuring that the goods and services we buy support resilience and help prepare our supply chain for the challenges ahead.

Ultimately, climate change adaptation is about future-proofing the railway for passengers and for the communities that rely on us. Through early action, collaborative planning and continuous learning, we are preparing CrossCountry to meet the needs of the future with confidence.



#3d



SENSE OF PLACE

Celebrating the unique identity of towns and cities we serve

At CrossCountry, we do more than take people from A to B – we connect them to the heart of the towns and cities along our routes. The railway has always played a role in shaping communities, but it can also unintentionally erode the unique identity of places. As trains have increased physical mobility, they have also made towns and cities feel more alike, with faster, easier travel sometimes blurring the differences that once set communities apart.

That's why, with such a large network, we see it as our responsibility to not just link communities but to help protect and celebrate what makes them distinctive. Through Sense of Place, we're restoring pride, showcasing heritage and culture, and highlighting the stories, traditions and landmarks that define each destination.

By working with local partners and championing cultural assets, our served stations and stops become more than gateways, they become introductions to the people and character of each place. We also recognise that access to travel, and the benefits it brings, is not equally shared. That's why Sense of Place sits at the core of our sustainability approach, ensuring that the communities most at risk of losing their identity through homogenisation are also the ones we actively support.

When our destinations thrive, so do the people who live, work and visit there. For CrossCountry, Sense of Place is not only about movement, but about belonging. We are making sure that as we connect the nation, we also help communities hold on to what makes them unique.

Our 12-Month Update

Over the last 12 months, we have continued to strengthen our ties with local communities through the Community Rail Partnerships. We have provided £393,000 of core funding, alongside an additional £130,000 for projects aligned to our strategic objectives. We are proud to work with passionate individuals who act as a bridge between the local communities and the railway.

Over the past year, we supported the creation of a new visitor centre at Holy Trinity Church in Chesterfield, the resting place of George Stephenson. The project refurbished community facilities, including the kitchen and toilets, to modern standards, while creating a space that tells the story of one of Britain's greatest railway pioneers. Alongside its heritage role, the centre has become a hub for local support services, offering activities for people affected by homelessness, mental health challenges and social isolation. In doing so, it has celebrated Chesterfield's railway heritage while strengthening the fabric of its community.

In Cornwall, we partnered with the Cornwall Community Foundation to deliver 16 grassroots projects across the county, doubling the number from the previous year and reaching more than 3,300 people. Many of these initiatives were rooted in heritage and community identity.

For example, St Austell Library Support Association marked the 80th anniversary of VE Day with cross-generational workshops, exhibitions of local memorabilia, and storytelling sessions with Cornish speakers - giving younger generations a chance to connect with the county's wartime history and traditions. Projects such as the Cornwall Bicycle Project promoted sustainable transport while reviving community cycling culture, teaching bike repair skills and refurbishing donated bicycles to reduce waste and provide affordable travel.



By supporting these and other initiatives, we helped protect and celebrate what makes Cornwall distinctive, ensuring that local traditions, shared memories and community resilience remain visible and valued across one of the most deprived areas of our network.

In the May of this year, we welcomed applications for the next cycle of funding. We received a record number of applications and were pleased to support 10 initiatives for the 25/26 year.



At the end of May, nine art panels were unveiled at Northwich Station, funded by train operators CrossCountry and Northern together with Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership to celebrate Railway 200.

The artwork was created by Northwich based artist Jim Stanley. Jim's signature monochrome style works are famous in the area, having created pieces for Witton Albion Football Club and Radio Northwich.



We were delighted to sponsor the production of a set of informative and eye-catching history panels for our community partners at Wingfield 1947 Station charity, when they told us they were attending the Railway 200 Greatest Gathering in Derby

Our short-term plan (by March 2029)

Vision: We will be recognised as a rail operator that strengthens the identity of the places we serve. Every station will act as a gateway into its community, celebrating local heritage and culture while creating spaces that feel welcoming, connected and reflective of the people who use them.

By 2029, we will focus on restoring and celebrating the heritage and identity of the towns and cities along our routes. Working with local partners, community groups and cultural organisations, we will co-create projects that bring local identity to life.

Using our established Community Rail Partnerships and Customer and Communities Investment Fund, we will support communities most at risk of losing their sense of identity, ensuring they are given equitable access to opportunities that protect and celebrate their uniqueness. Our initiatives will be regionally balanced, supporting towns and cities across the South West, North East, Midlands and beyond.

Sense of Place will also be embedded into our Social Value Charter. This means our procurement, partnerships and investment decisions will actively champion cultural heritage and community identity. By 2027, we will publish an annual review of place-based activity, demonstrating how our efforts have restored pride and strengthened the character of communities across our network.

Key Deliverables

- We will integrate place-based considerations into procurement and investment decisions.
- We will develop metrics and reporting to measure the impact of our work on communities and local identity by December 2026.
- We will produce a Needs Analysis report for all the communities we serve by May 2026.
- We will ensure all Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) receive their core funding on time, as per the NRC.
- We will allocate all CRP non-core funding to projects that deliver meaningful benefits.
- We will successfully deliver all projects supported by the Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF).

Our long-term plan (2035)

By 2035, we want Sense of Place to be recognised as a leading example of how rail can strengthen local identity and social value. Our vision is to ensure that every station on our network is more than a stop; it is a welcoming gateway into the heritage, culture and future of the communities it serves. We will be known for celebrating what makes places unique, protecting local identity against homogenisation, and enabling pride of place to flourish across our regions.

This means passengers will not only experience reliable and sustainable rail services but will also gain a deeper connection to the communities they travel through. For the communities themselves, our network will provide both opportunity and recognition, a platform for local stories, creativity and economic growth.

#3e



CONNECTED JOURNEYS

Creating seamless door-to-door travel experiences

We want travelling by train to be the simplest and most appealing choice. Connected Journeys is our commitment to making every stage of travel work seamlessly, linking rail with buses, trams, cycling, and walking routes so the journey from door to destination feels smooth, reliable, and stress-free.

By making greener travel more convenient, we can help reduce traffic, cut emissions, and create cleaner, more accessible towns and cities. Connected Journeys play a vital role in supporting modal shift from cars and planes to greener transport, such as rail, buses and bikes. They also optimise the use of the rail network by encouraging fuller trains across different legs, reducing empty seats and making better use of rolling stock.

First- and last-mile connections are key to this ambition. By expanding options such as e-bikes, e-vehicles and zero-emission buses, we can cut the carbon footprint of entire door-to-door trips while also creating a more seamless experience for our customers and our employees. Over time, these improvements don't just enhance convenience, they help shift long-term travel behaviours towards greener choices for all.

By working with partners across regions to improve integration, accessibility, and innovation in how people move, we are creating a transport system that is more sustainable, reliable and appealing for the long term.



Working with two Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) in Stockport - Crewe to Manchester and South East Manchester - plus Foundation 92, a Salford-based charity helping community groups through engagement, CrossCountry's community engagement funding was provided to engage vulnerable young people, educating them more about the railway.

Our 12 Month Update

Over the past year we have strengthened connections across our network to make journeys simpler and more seamless. We launched our 3 Nations Direct service, linking Wales, England and Scotland into a single train journey and enhancing cross-region connectivity. The new Scotland-Wales Direct service has opened up opportunities for customers.

We also introduced 50 new origin-destination flows on CrossCountry connections via Peterborough, delivering a smoother travel experience for customers in East Anglia. To improve multi-modality, we updated our website with a dedicated bus links page, helping customers plan their first- and last-mile connections with ease.

Our short-term plan (by March 2029)

Vision: We will make travelling with CrossCountry part of a much simpler, more connected transport experience. Journeys will be seamless from first to last mile, with easier fares and products, integrated multi-modal options, and no need for split-ticketing. Customers will enjoy flexible, sustainable and well-connected travel across our network and beyond. By March 2029, our goal is to achieve better geo-targeting of marketing spend, so we can influence customer behaviour in ways that benefit both society and the railway. We will introduce new timetabling solutions and develop a deeper understanding of how customers plan and make onward journeys.

To get there, we will launch a new website and CRM system, harness mobile Network Data to better identify travel patterns across modes, and improve timetabling to enhance our rail offering.

Key Deliverables

- We will establish targets for connectivity reporting, by December 2026.

Our long-term plan (2035)

By March 2035, our goal is to make travelling with CrossCountry part of a seamless, well-connected transport experience. Journeys will be easier to plan, simpler to pay for, and better linked to other modes of transport. Rail fares and products will be straightforward, with split-ticketing eradicated, removing unnecessary complexity for our customers.

We expect to see more integrated, multi-modal options emerging across the industry. These developments will allow customers to move effortlessly between rail and other forms of transport, supporting flexible travel and opening up opportunities to learn, work and connect with greater ease.

To achieve this, we will back national fare simplification processes and support the introduction of new Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) products. By negotiating and enabling new solutions through PTEs, we will create greater flexibility, ensure easier access to learning and working opportunities, and deliver a customer experience that is simple, sustainable and fully connected.



#4



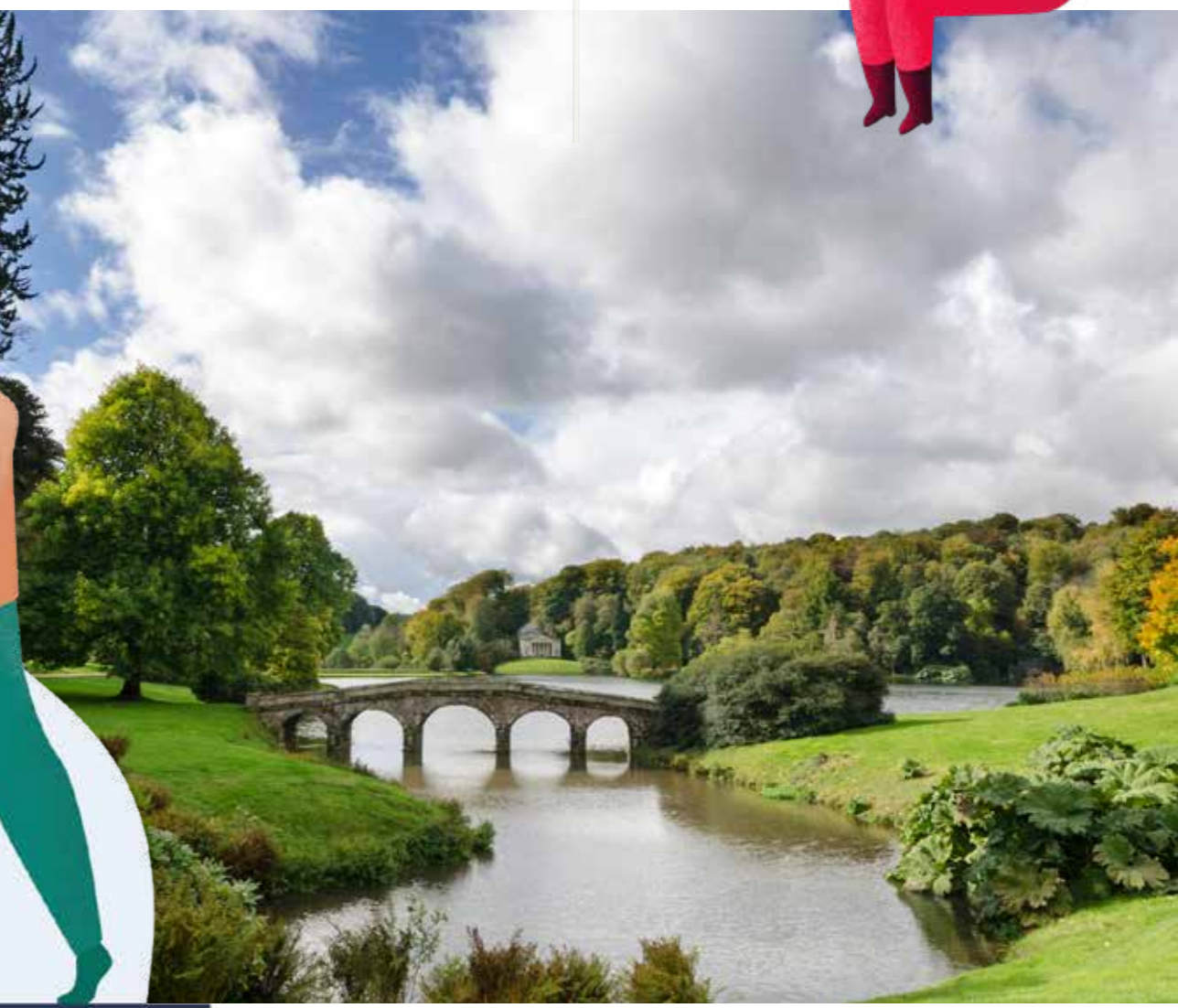
PLANET

As a national train operator, we are proud to offer one of the lowest-carbon modes of long-distance travel in the UK. But we know that being the greener option is not enough, we must continually reduce our own environmental impact and support others to do the same.

The Planet pillar of our Sustainability Strategy is focused on how we manage resources, emissions and leased infrastructure in a way that protects the environment and supports the UK's transition to net zero. It is built on a clear ambition: to operate cleaner, leaner and more responsibly both now and into the future.

This means taking decisive action to cut our fuel emissions and transition away from diesel. It means looking closely at the sustainability of our supply chain, the efficiency of our workspaces and the waste we generate. And it means embedding environmental thinking into how we plan, procure and deliver our services every day.

Our Planet pillar focuses on three interconnected areas: Carbon; Water; and Waste. Together, these modules shape how we reduce our footprint and play our part in building a more circular, climate-resilient transport system.



#4a



CARBON

Reducing our carbon footprint

For CrossCountry, reducing carbon emissions is the defining environmental challenge of our time. Our Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) analysis shows that diesel fuel accounts for over 99% of our Scope 1 and 2 emissions, making decarbonisation central to our long-term success and the health of the communities we serve. Alongside our traction emissions, the spaces we occupy, depots, offices, and shared facilities, also contribute to our footprint. While we don't own these sites, they shape how we work, how we use energy, and how we support our people.

This combined module brings together three priorities:

1. **Cutting carbon from our operations**, by improving fleet efficiency, trialling cleaner fuels, and accelerating our transition to low-carbon traction.
2. **Making the spaces we use more sustainable**, by reducing energy consumption, improving efficiency, and working with landlords to invest in low-carbon infrastructure.
3. **Embedding low-carbon thinking into our value chain**

Together, these actions ensure that every mile we operate and every site we occupy moves us closer to a cleaner, low-carbon future.

Our 12 Month Update

Over the past year, we have continued to deliver year-on-year reductions in diesel-related emissions, with a steady downward trend in CO₂e per mile across our fleet. We rolled out Intelligent Engine Stop Start (IESS) technology to part of the Voyager fleet, with full rollout on track to be completed by 31 October 2025. This technology is expected to reduce fleet emissions by up to 2.5%. In parallel, we began working with Alstom on the development of IESS+, a next-generation version of the system that has the potential for rollout in 2026. Alongside this, we also investigated the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as a sustainable, near carbon-neutral fuel alternative suitable for trial deployment. We engaged with our maintenance providers to understand the feasibility of HVO, whilst working with the RSSB to quantify the emissions benefit.

We have taken significant steps to improve the energy efficiency of our leased sites. Energy monitoring technology has been installed across all properties, enabling us to track real-time consumption and identify opportunities for savings. We also completed a full sustainability survey of all leased buildings, assessing insulation, heating systems and usage patterns to highlight areas for improvement. In addition, we mapped energy use by headcount, allowing us to target action where consumption was disproportionately high.

This year marked the first time we mapped emissions from our supply chain, providing us with a clearer picture of our Scope 3 impacts. We baselined these emissions against 2023/24 levels, creating a foundation to set targets for annual reductions. To embed long-term progress, we also introduced carbon-related questions into key tenders, ensuring that sustainability performance is considered alongside cost and quality in our procurement decisions.

Our short-term plan (by March 2029)

Vision: By 2029, we will make appropriate steps towards reducing our Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 63% in line with our science based targets, while transforming our leased spaces into low-carbon, energy-efficient environments.

By 31 October 2025, we will complete the rollout of Intelligent Engine Stop Start (IESS) technology across the entire Voyager fleet, delivering measurable reductions in diesel-related emissions. We will also advance the development and implementation of IESS+ with Alstom, ensuring that the fleet continues to benefit from the latest efficiency improvements. Alongside this, we will conduct a full feasibility study into Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) and other alternative fuels to assess their potential role in reducing our carbon footprint. To track progress in real time, we will use Scope 1 and 2 emissions data to forecast improvements on a day-by-day basis and closely monitor reductions in carbon intensity.



Upmo, the Edinburgh and Lothians-based charity supporting adults with learning disabilities and autism, has unveiled its brand-new electric van - funded by CrossCountry's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF).

We will use the insights gathered from our sustainability surveys to prioritise upgrades across our leased sites by December 2026. Working closely with landlords, we will install energy-efficient solutions such as LED lighting, smart heating controls and improved insulation. Where possible, we will also explore co-investment opportunities in shared buildings to maximise impact and reduce costs. Importantly, we will ensure that all upgrades deliver social value by using local suppliers, creating apprenticeships, and improving accessibility for the communities we serve.

We will embed sustainability considerations into our procurement processes by December 2027, by ensuring that all tenders above a set threshold include questions on carbon reduction and wider environmental performance. This will help us influence suppliers to take action on sustainability and align our supply chain with our long-term climate goals.

Key Deliverables

- We will reduce our Scope 1 and 2 CO₂e emissions by 2.5% each year until 2030.
- We will achieve a 63% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 CO₂e emissions by 2035.
- We will outline the indicative costs for a new low-carbon fleet by December 2025.
- We will reduce energy consumption by 2.5% each year across our leased sites.

Our long-term plan (2035)

Subject to funding, by 2035, CrossCountry will have introduced a new, low-carbon fleet, delivering a step change in sustainability across our operations. This transition will reduce our CO₂e emissions by at least 63% compared to 2023/24 levels, fully aligning our progress with our near-term Science Based Targets.

All spaces leased by CrossCountry will either generate their own renewable power on site or source electricity through certified green tariff renewable energy. This approach will ensure that our buildings and offices contribute directly to our decarbonisation goals while also reducing long-term operating costs.

By 2035, CrossCountry will actively engage with suppliers representing 90% of our total supply chain spend. Through collaboration, we will promote emission reduction initiatives, share best practice, and encourage innovation that helps lower carbon across the wider rail industry.

#4b



WASTE

Turning waste into an opportunity

Waste is more than a by-product of our operation, it's a reflection of how efficiently and responsibly we manage materials across our network. Whether it's packaging from on-board services, office supplies, or industrial materials from refurbishments, the way we handle waste has a direct impact on our environmental footprint.

At CrossCountry, waste is a material issue because of the scale and complexity of our operation. With services spanning the country and shared infrastructure at many sites, managing waste in a consistent and sustainable way is both a challenge and a priority.

Our goal is simple: to create a culture where waste is seen as a resource, driving us toward a truly circular economy.

Our 12 Month Update

Over the past year, we have taken clear steps to improve waste management across our operations, both in the spaces where our people work and on board our trains.

In our staff offices and train crew depots, we aligned our waste provision in line with the Simpler Recycling legislation by rolling out food waste bins across key locations. Where we manage our own waste contracts, including at Newcastle, Leicester and Cambridge, we have updated our agreements to include appropriate segregation and disposal of food, recycling and general waste. At other sites, where waste services are provided by landlords, we are working closely with building managers to ensure that waste is handled and disposed of correctly.

These changes are improving how waste is sorted at the point of disposal and helping to reduce contamination across all waste streams.

Alongside this, we've continued to develop our approach to on-board waste, which makes up a visible and significant part of our environmental footprint. Over the past year, we have trialled new on-board waste segregation systems, designed to align with Simpler Recycling principles and make it easier for staff and customers to separate recyclable and non-recyclable items. We've also created a seamless method for capturing on-board waste data using our Service Quality Regime forms, giving us better insight into what is being generated and where.

In response to staff feedback, we are also reviewing food waste in our first class offering, with a view to developing a minimal-waste catering solution. This review is exploring ways to eliminate excess food waste and introduce packaging that supports waste reduction, all while maintaining a high-quality customer experience.

Together, these actions are helping to build a more consistent, data-driven and sustainable approach to waste management across CrossCountry.

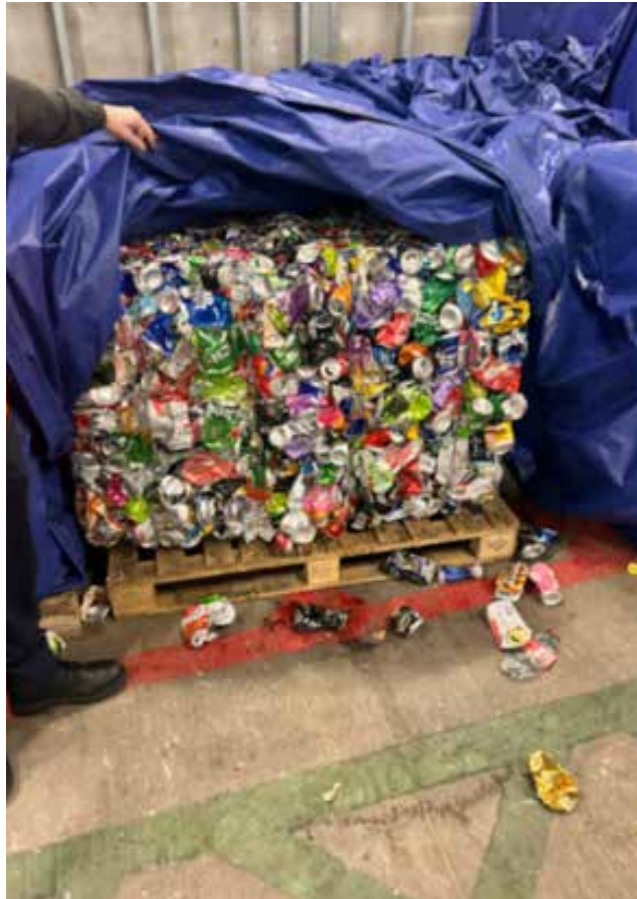
Our short-term plan (by March 2029)

Vision: We will reduce waste at source, improve on-board segregation, and embed circular practices to view waste as a resource.

Over the next three years, we will continue to drive down waste across all areas of our operation by focusing on waste reduction, smarter design and circular thinking.

As part of our fleet refurbishment programme, we will look to reuse or recycle as much material as possible, from interiors to mechanical parts, ensuring these large-scale projects do not generate unnecessary waste. This will require collaboration across our supply chain to plan for reuse at the earliest stages of delivery.

In parallel, we will establish targets for on-board waste reduction in 2026, supported by improved data collection and waste segregation practices. We will expand the trials currently underway and apply lessons learned to standardise processes and infrastructure across all services.



We are working with our colleagues in the wider industry to tackle on board waste recycling, we're learning from best practice, such as this waste recycling facility in Euston, London

We will roll out a new first-class catering offering, to support our waste targets and commitments by December 2026. At our depots and offices, we will continue to roll out improved facilities for waste sorting, and work with landlords to continue to meet the requirements of Simpler Recycling. We will ensure we have a consistent and compliant waste management approach across all locations we occupy, whether managed by us directly or in partnership.

Through our Uniform Project, we're reimagining waste management at CrossCountry. Partnering with our chosen supplier, we're making sure that no old CrossCountry uniform ends up in landfill. Instead, every item will be reused, repurposed, or reimaged in innovative ways - turning waste into opportunity while supporting a more sustainable railway.

Key Deliverables

- We will establish targets for onboard waste reduction by December 2026.

Our long-term plan (2035)

By 2035, we want to embed a zero-waste mindset across the organisation. Our long-term goal is that all waste generated by CrossCountry is treated as a resource, with reuse, recycling or as a last resort energy recovery built into every process.

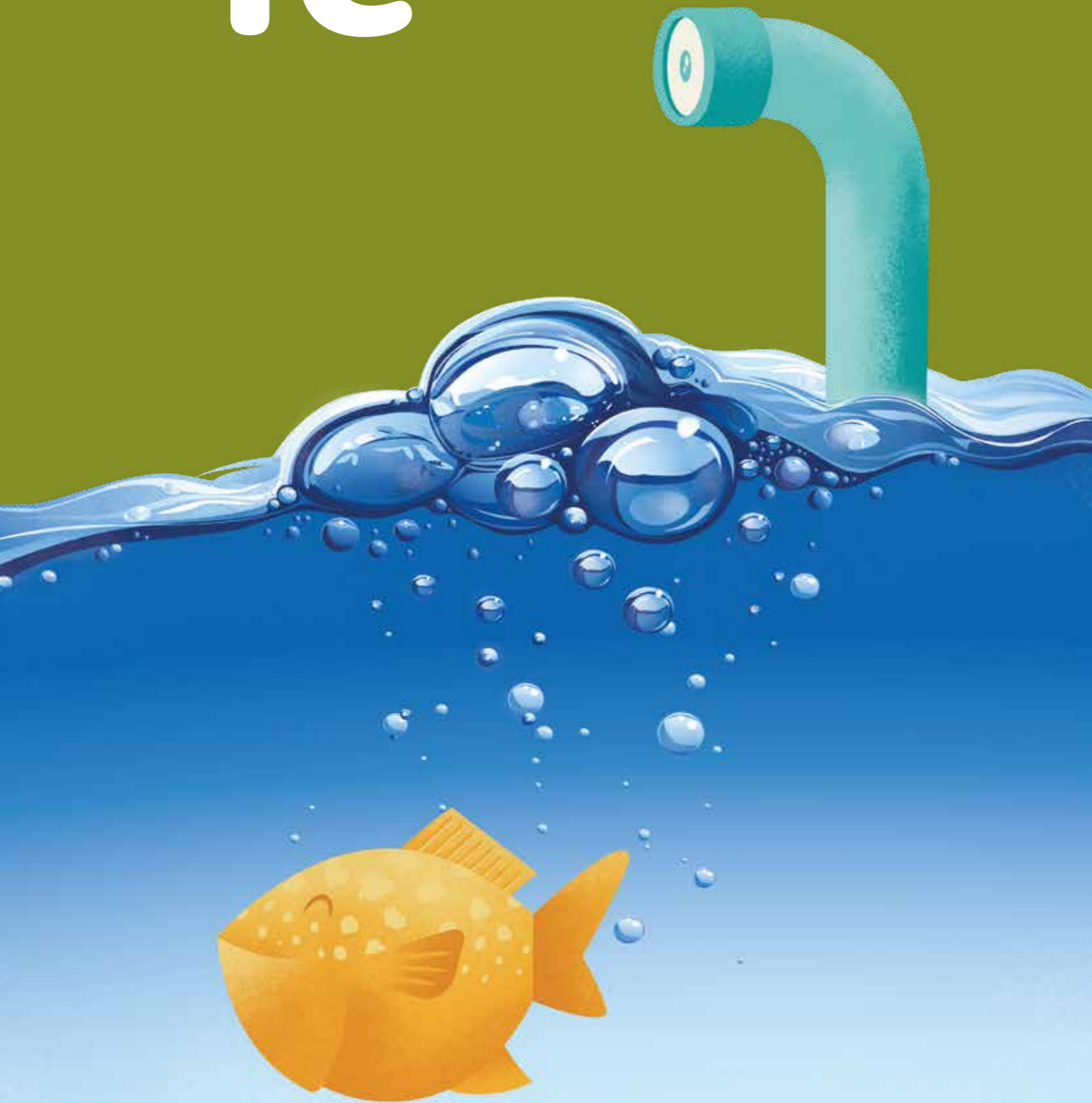
We will continue to refine our first class and on-board services to further minimise waste, moving toward circular catering models that reduce packaging, prioritise local and low-waste sourcing, and ensure that unused items are recovered or repurposed wherever possible.

In our workplaces, we will work toward full circularity, using procurement strategies that avoid waste at the source, and ensuring the spaces we use are designed and operated with sustainability in mind.

Ultimately, our vision is for waste to be designed out of our business as far as possible. When waste does occur, it should be measurable, manageable, and part of a closed-loop system that reflects both our environmental values and our operational responsibilities.



#4e



WATER

Managing our water use

Water is a finite and shared resource. For CrossCountry, it underpins the safe and reliable operation of our sites, depots and customer facilities. It is also an area of increasing scrutiny, as climate change brings more frequent periods of both drought and flooding. Managing our water use responsibly allows us to reduce costs, build resilience, and protect the environments and communities we serve. By treating water as a valuable resource, we play our part in safeguarding it for future generations while strengthening the sustainability of our operations.

Our 12 Month Update

Over the past year we have taken major steps to build a stronger picture of our water footprint. We have installed flow and temperature meters across 19 of our 20 sites, giving us the first clear, site-specific data on how water is being consumed. Alongside this, we have begun to integrate water data into our developing Sustainability Power BI dashboard, bringing together live utilities data in one place to support smarter decision-making. We have also commissioned work to explore how to capture more accurate water flow readings from our head office in Birmingham, addressing one of our biggest data gaps.

Key Deliverables

- We will reduce water consumption by 2.5% annually.

Our short-term plan (by March 2029)

Vision: Water is effectively monitored and measured, with water harvesting opportunities embedded into practice.

Our priority is to build a complete and reliable water baseline across every site we operate from. The site survey programme currently underway will inform a dedicated Sustainability Improvements report by October 2025, highlighting where investment can reduce consumption and increase efficiency. We will use these insights to set annual reduction targets, supported by operational changes and engagement with staff. Alongside site activity, we will work closely with our maintenance suppliers to capture accurate data on water used for train washing, ensuring this significant area of consumption is properly measured and managed. This data-led approach will not only cut unnecessary usage but will also strengthen our resilience to supply risks and changing regulation.

Our long-term plan (2035)

Looking further ahead, by 2035 we aim to be recognised as a rail operator that treats water carefully. That means embedding water efficiency into all aspects of our operation, from procurement to building management, and investing in systems that support circular use wherever possible. We will continue to develop region-specific approaches to managing water stress, ensuring our depots and offices are resilient to local conditions. A key part of this will be working with our suppliers to install water harvesting systems for train washing, reducing reliance on mains supply and making better use of captured rainwater. Ultimately, our ambition is to reduce water consumption across our estate while protecting quality, ensuring that CrossCountry's growth is achieved in balance with one of our most precious natural resources.

#5



Social Value

At CrossCountry, Social Value is not just a principle – it’s how we measure the real-world impact of our Sustainability Strategy across People, Places and Planet. It reflects the positive change we create for our colleagues, customers, communities and the environment, and helps us understand where we need to do more.

We use the Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT), underpinned by the National Social Value Standard (SVS), to quantify our performance across social, economic and environmental dimensions. This methodology, aligned with HM Treasury’s Green Book guidance, enables us to account for both positive contributions and negative externalities, including the environmental cost of our emissions, to calculate a net Social Value figure.

Delivering Social Value Across Our Pillars

People

In 2024/25 we generated over £30 million in Social Value from employment, apprenticeships and upskilling, including £4.1 million from apprenticeships alone. We are proud to have been recognised as one of the Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers in the UK. Initiatives such as Upmo Eats, inclusive recruitment practices and workforce development have helped create fairer opportunities and meaningful social outcomes.

Case Study: Creating Opportunities Through the Rail Academy

At CrossCountry, we believe in using our railway to unlock opportunities for people and communities. Our partnership with the Newcastle Rail Academy (RA) is a shining example of how rail can drive social mobility and open doors to careers in our industry.

Our involvement began two years ago when colleagues from our regions joined the Rail Academy programme, supporting students to complete essential training in food hygiene and Personal Track Safety (PTS). Recognising the potential to do more, we worked with partners across the business to create new experiences, including fire evacuation training at York Rail Operating Centre, cab rides, and hands-on time with driver simulators.

These activities quickly built confidence among students, helping them to develop skills that extend well beyond the classroom.

For the 2024/25 programme, we introduced a richer mix of training and support, designed directly around the needs and interests of the students. This included:

- A dedicated session on drugs and alcohol awareness, following student feedback.
- CV workshops and employability support.
- Fleet talks and food hygiene refreshers.
- Visits to the Edinburgh Signal Training Centre and York ROC.
- Recruitment days, offering real opportunities to engage with our teams.

Through this programme, students not only gained valuable skills but also discovered the confidence to pursue future careers in rail.

“What makes me the most proud is watching the students grow in confidence. Every session brought out something new in them, and you could see the spark when they realised they could really build a future in rail.”

- Clare Buchanan, Programme Lead, Assistant Driver Manager (Newcastle)

The results speak for themselves. In 2023/24, two students successfully joined our catering team. By 2024/25, while no direct hires were made, several students secured roles with Network Rail and Nexus. More importantly, colleagues across CrossCountry witnessed a transformation in students’ self-belief and ambition.

We're now developing the 2025/26 programme, with plans to expand opportunities even further. Our commitment remains the same: to empower young people with the skills, experience and confidence to thrive - whether at CrossCountry or elsewhere in the rail sector.

This work reflects our Sustainability commitment to support social mobility and access to opportunities, helping to create a workforce that reflects and serves the communities along our network.

Places

Our place-based impact focused on improving community connection and confidence in travel. Our Customer and Communities Investment Fund (CCIF) enabled deeper partnerships with grassroots organisations to deliver value where it matters most. Our ongoing work to improve biodiversity across our network strengthens our positive legacy.

Case Study: The Lias Line Cycle Network

At CrossCountry, we're committed to creating lasting value for the communities we serve. That's why we're proud to sponsor a mile of the Lias Line Greenway - a 23.5-mile cycle route that follows a former railway line between Rugby and Leamington Spa.

This route connects people to nature and history, linking wildlife reserves, canals and villages along the way. Our support helps maintain and enhance this much-loved green corridor, ensuring it remains open, welcoming and rich in biodiversity.

Through our partnership with Sustrans and GreenTheUK, we're contributing to conservation work such as path clearing, wildlife monitoring, and creating new habitats for birds, bats and pollinators. It's part of how we're delivering on our sustainability and social value commitments, supporting healthier lifestyles, local heritage and thriving ecosystems. By investing in the Lias Line, we're helping to protect an important community asset so more people can enjoy greener, more sustainable journeys

Planet

Our environmental footprint included a Social Value cost of £28.2 million, reflecting the impact of Scope 1 and 2 emissions. While this presents a clear challenge, it also highlights our commitment to transparency and change. Crucially, this figure does not yet include Scope 4 avoided emissions - the carbon saved when customers choose CrossCountry instead of air or car travel. On some key routes, our trains emit up to five times less CO₂ per passenger than domestic flights.

Case Study: Science Based Targets

At CrossCountry, we believe creating social value means taking responsibility for the impact we have on people, places and the planet. Climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing society, and reducing our emissions is central to delivering lasting value.

In 2025, we had our climate targets formally approved by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). Our commitment is to reduce:

- Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 63% by 2035, compared to 2024 levels.
- Scope 3 emissions by 37.5% in the same timeframe.

To set these targets, we carried out a comprehensive baselining exercise, mapping our carbon footprint across operations, fleet, energy use and supply chain. This gives us a clear picture of where emissions come from and ensures we can make data-led decisions about future investment.

By setting independently verified, science based targets, CrossCountry is helping to accelerate the UK's transition to a low-carbon economy. For the communities we serve, this means cleaner air, a healthier environment and a railway that plays its part in tackling the climate crisis. It's a tangible example of how our sustainability commitments generate social value beyond the railway, supporting a safer, greener future for everyone.

Our plan for Social Value

As we continue to implement our Sustainability Strategy, we will keep measuring and improving our Social Value across our People, Places and Planet pillars.

We are committed to:

- Expanding the scope of what we measure, including capturing avoided emissions (Scope 4) by 2026
- Embedding Social Value into procurement, partnerships and planning for selected contracts
- Using data to drive decision-making and target investment where it has the greatest impact
- Being open and accountable about our performance and progress

Social Value will remain a central part of how we understand, shape and share our impact, and how we ensure the railway delivers more than transport. It delivers opportunity, wellbeing and lasting value for the communities we serve.

Because, at CrossCountry, ***we don't just stop here.***



Closing

This Sustainability Strategy marks an important step in CrossCountry's journey to become a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient operator, one that not only connects people and places, but creates lasting value for the communities we serve and the environment we all depend on.

Through our pillars of People, Places and Planet, we have set out a clear and actionable vision for the future. From cutting emissions and embedding circularity, to championing social mobility and protecting biodiversity, our priorities reflect both the challenges we face and the opportunity we have to lead.

We know that real progress won't come from policy alone. It will come from the day-to-day actions of our colleagues, the partnerships we build, and the decisions we make across our network. This Sustainability Strategy is our commitment to thinking differently, acting boldly and holding ourselves accountable - not just because it's expected of us, but because it's the right thing to do.

The railway has always been a driver of change by connecting people, opening up opportunity, and shaping how we live and work. But today, it must also be a driver of sustainability.

Sustainability is not a destination for us, it's a commitment to constant progress. We will continue to challenge ourselves, our partners and our industry to do better. Because building a more inclusive, lower-carbon, and resilient railway is not just our ambition, it is our responsibility.

We don't just stop here - we go beyond the journey



Take us on
Your Journey

CROSS
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