



Great  
Western  
Railway

# GWR Social Value Report 2022/2023



# Foreword



Welcome to this our second Social Value Report.

Railways make the connections that allow communities to thrive, whether for business, education, health, meeting friends and family or simply enjoying some leisure, and we understand that the services we provide, both locally and nationally, are a key part of the fabric of life.

When Brunel built the Great Western Railway, it didn't just connect communities, it played a key role in social mobility and in economic prosperity. Today's railway is equally well placed to support real and lasting change delivering a more sustainable future for the communities we serve. This report is therefore a key part of our Sustainable Rail Blueprint, where we set out to create and communicate a shared vision for social value.

We want to see social value firmly established as a common metric, clearly and consistently measuring rail's impact on society. We want to get this right, and that means using the insights and benchmarking now available to us to expand our delivery and to report back to you, our customers, and our stakeholders on how we are doing, and where we can do better.

Following last year's report, we were asked to give more information about our Community Rail Partnerships, who they are, what they do, and why we support them. They are a very important part of our community engagement work, and you will find more case studies relating to their activities in this year's report. We were also asked to make it easier for groups to access our community outreach and in particular our "Try The Train" programme. We agree this is something that does deserve wider acknowledgement and we now have a dedicated webpage.

Also new to the report this year is our Future Aims and Measures and Social Value Route Map, this section looks at how we embed new processes and initiatives to ensure we continuously improve. We will continue to report against the Rail Safety Standards Board 'Common Social Impact Framework and Social Value Tool' and we will share an overview of the work we are doing, often in partnership, to deliver positive social impact – it is also important though, that we share our thoughts on where we go next.

I hope you enjoy what you read. I hope we inspire you to join with us, and I hope too, that if you see an opportunity for us to do better that you will let us know. We believe in engagement, we believe in our communities, and we know with your continued help and support, we can make a difference.

Joe Graham  
Business Assurance and Strategy Director

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Front cover image: Nova Primary School, Shirehampton, Bristol, taking part in a rail safety education day with Platform (Community Rail Partnership Education Programme). Part of the day involved a visit to the Secret Garden at Avonmouth Station where they learnt about sustainability in action.

# Executive summary

Great Western Railway (GWR) operates trains across the Great Western contract area, which includes South Wales, the West Country, the Cotswolds, across southern England and into London. This wide reach affords us the opportunity to have a positive and lasting impact on the wellbeing and prosperity of many thousands of people. At GWR, we recognise that operating as a responsible business is crucial for our long-term success and fundamental to delivering a railway that will meet the needs of society, without compromising future quality of life.

For the second consecutive year, GWR has commissioned consultants, Akerlof, to assess our social value using the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT). As an early adopter of the RSVT, we used it for the first time last year to measure the social value generated by our day-to-day operations, investments, and projects, allowing us to conduct a thorough analysis and report on the social value of our activities.

Having set a baseline, we are now able to start to set targeted strategies for improvement. Through the insights gained we aim to expand and enhance the quality of our data reporting as well as continue to develop how we manage our impact on society, the environment, and the economy.

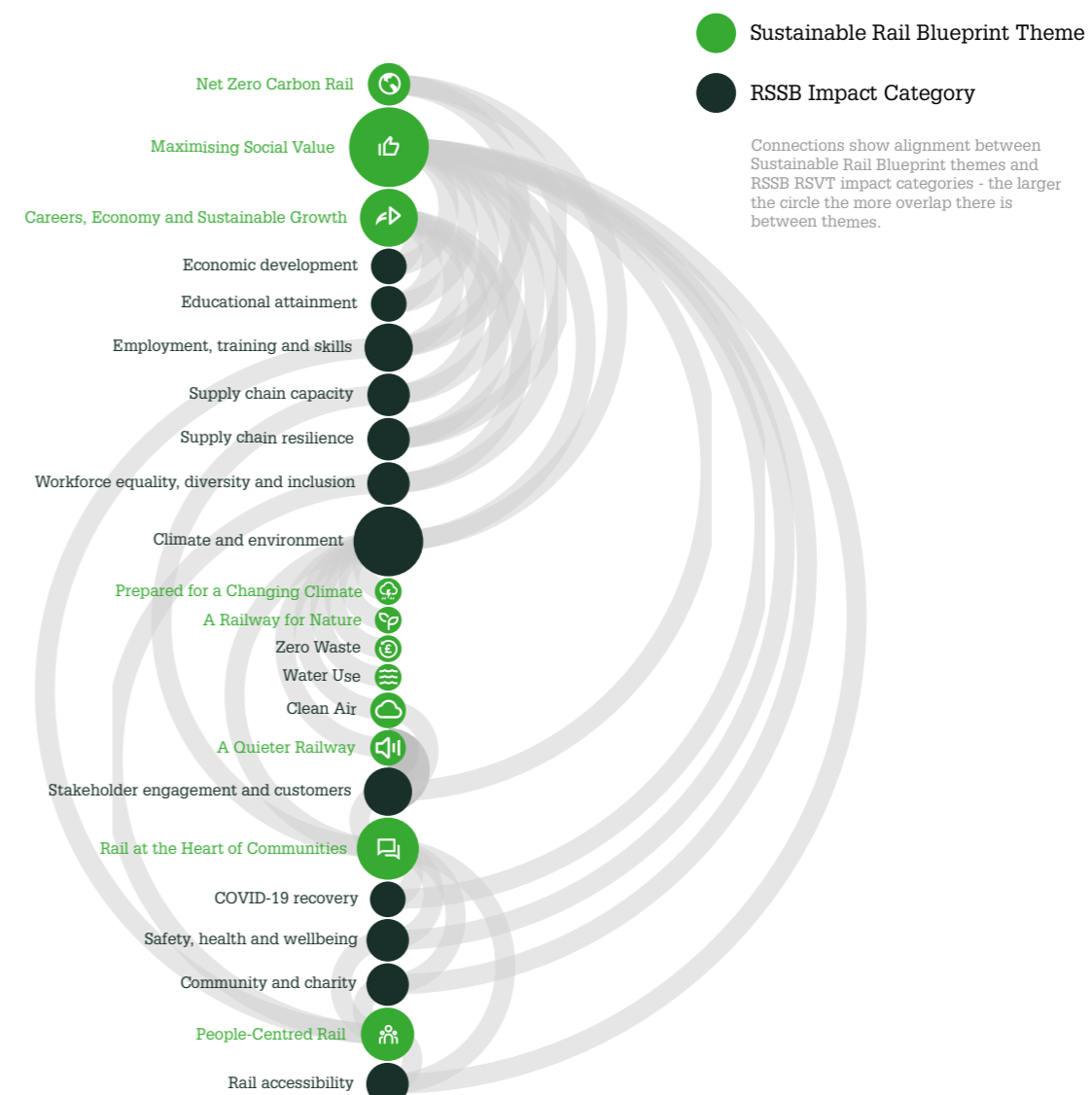
We equally recognise the importance of supporting the wider rail industry to continuously improve. As such, we are proud to play an active role within the Rail Social Value Tool Steering Group, which serves as a crucial platform for cross-industry collaboration and information-sharing related to social sustainability. Through our participation, we aim to drive the use and ongoing development of the RSVT to ensure it remains a useful tool for measuring social value across the rail sector.

This Social Value Report is structured to provide a holistic overview of our activities across all 12 of RSSB's social impact areas. As demonstrated throughout this report, the activities undertaken by our business can have a hugely positive impact on individual people's lives. Between 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023, GWR is proud to have delivered a total operational, environmental and economic impact valued at £715,451,402.88.



# Alignment with the RSSB Sustainable Rail Blueprint

In acknowledgement of the wider context, the RSSB has recently launched the Sustainable Rail Blueprint, which helps rail organisations align their own day-to-day operations with rail's overall strategic sustainability aims. The Blueprint contains 11 categories, which demonstrate significant alignment across the 12 social impact areas within the RSVT, as shown below.



The Blueprint also includes a route map for train operating companies, with specific actions and targets aligned to each of the 11 sustainability categories. Within this report, we have included a similar Social Value Route Map, which provides a comprehensive plan of the steps GWR will take to ensure the social value we deliver is both measured and maximised.

To clearly illustrate the correlation between our social value initiatives and the Sustainable Rail Blueprint framework, we have included icons within our Social Value Route Map to demonstrate where our initiatives are also meeting the ambitions set out within the Blueprint.

# Our approach

## RSSB Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT)

Developed as part of a progressive evolution of the Common Social Impact Framework for Rail, the RSSB has identified 12 key areas of social impact for rail, which have been adopted as part of our assessment:

1. Employment, training and skills
2. Educational attainment
3. Supply chain resilience
4. Supply chain capacity
5. Rail accessibility
6. Workforce equality, diversity and inclusion
7. Community and charity
8. Stakeholder engagement and customers
9. Safety, health and wellbeing
10. Economic development
11. Climate and environment
12. COVID-19 recovery

### Time

GWR has completed this exercise to include data from 1 April 2022 until 31 March 2023 inclusive, encompassing 13 railway reporting periods. This will be referred to throughout this report as the 'reporting period'.

### Attribution

The attribution rate is the level for which GWR is wholly or partly responsible for the social value intervention. This has been kept at the RSSB Rail Social Value Tool (RSVT) pre-set recommended standard of 0.15, meaning only 15% of the associated social-economic value is claimed by GWR, eliminating the risk of overclaiming.

### Geography

The geographic definition of 'local' has been set as the 'South West' within the RSVT. While the South West serves as our primary area of operation, it's important to note that our presence extends beyond this region. For instance, we have a strong presence in South Wales, and our report provides a comprehensive overview of our operations across multiple geographical areas from which we operate.

When calculating local apprentices and local employees, GWR has included those living within 25 miles of their location of work.

### Monetised and non-monetised metrics

The monetisation of social value is the method of assigning a financial value to the change experienced by a stakeholder because of an activity or intervention. Monetisation helps to understand the relative importance to those experiencing the change to focus decision-making to maximise social value, as well as provide a consistent unit of measurement to enable comparison.

While monetisation provides a tangible way to measure the value of our social impact, it is by no means the complete picture. The RSVT has therefore allowed us to capture our activities through both monetised and non-monetised data across a range of impacts. Where possible, we have included case studies throughout this report to bring this data to life, ensuring a comprehensive approach where we showcase all aspects of social value, through both qualitative and quantitative means.

## Exclusions

No data was included for Mental Health First Aid and Disability and Equality Awareness Refresher as training, as this is conducted every two years, and will be carried out in 2023-2024.

In terms of Diversity Reporting, GWR was able to provide a detailed breakdown, however the RSVT does not allow for complex data to be included. For example, gender diversity cannot be entered as male = x, female = x etc, only allowing a single figure to be uploaded. Where this was the case, a 0 was entered and further details were included in the notes section. Metrics affected were:

- Gender
- Marital status
- Ethnicity
- Disabled
- Sexual orientation
- Religion and belief
- Caring responsibilities

## Double counting

Of the metrics that were excluded due to the potential for double counting, all were able to be included within another field instead. These metrics are shown below:

Impact area	Sub-impact	Unit of measurement	Where it has been included
Employment, training and skills	Job creation	Number of FTEs	Job creation (general) (employment, training and skills)
Community and charity	Charitable and community volunteering	Number of community volunteers	Regular attendance at local groups (community and charity)
Community and charity	Community use of space and facilities	Number of users (general)	Users (community rail) (community and charity)
Community and charity	Fundraising (specifically match funding)	Cash donations	Economic Development, £value of match funding received

# Our measurements against the RSSB Common Social Impact Framework and Social Value Tool

As demonstrated throughout this report, our actions can shape people's lives. Between 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023, we have increased awareness of our own social value activity, demonstrated through the additional categories we have recorded data against, alongside an increase of activities delivered across a range of impact areas.

There have been many changes in the RSVT reporting tool following its initial trial year 2021-2022, many as a direct response to our feedback last year. We see this as a positive evolution of the tool and a more accurate reflection of value, however it does impact on the comparability of impact reports year on year. For example, feedback from train operators has led to a number of the proxy values being reduced, some quite significantly. The effects of these changes can be seen in the overall impact when expressed in financial terms.

In this reporting period, GWR has delivered a total operational, environmental and economic impact of £715,451,402.88. Despite the decrease in some proxy values, this is an increase of £76,162,475.41 since the previous reporting period. The breakdown is illustrated below:



When broken down into the 12 social impact areas, Employment, Training and Skills has the highest social impact value, whilst Community and Charity has the lowest.

Impact area	Social value
Employment, training and skills	£108,907,753.93
Educational attainment	£12,741,565.97
Supply chain resilience	N/A
Supply chain capacity	N/A
Rail accessibility	£6,401,365.73
Workforce equality, diversity and inclusion	£-612,280.91
Community and charity	£-3,204,788.22
Stakeholder engagement and customers	£9,153,618.79
Safety, health and wellbeing	£244,366,147.12
Economic development	£12,702,611.00
Climate and environment	£57,082,570.47
COVID-19 recovery	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>£447,538,563.88<sup>1</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> The 'total social value' shown in the breakdown excludes the economic impact of local FTEs (GVA) and local spend (including an uplift).

Capturing both positive and negative impacts allows for a balanced evaluation that takes into account the interests and wellbeing of our passengers, employees, local communities, and the environment. The negative value of -£5,980,770.30 for Community and Charity is driven by the inclusion of 'Experience of crime, vandalism, litter and anti-social behaviour'. Similarly, the negative value of -£612,280.91 for Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion stems from the inclusion of 'employee loss' – number of employees losing their jobs (including end of contract, resignation and excluding retirement and redundancy). We are keen to be transparent in our reporting practices to enable us to use the information we gain to inform decision-making, policy development, and improvements aimed at maximising the positive impacts, while mitigating the negative ones.

When looking at a further breakdown of the 12 social impact areas, GWR's top scoring sub-impact areas for the reporting period were as follows:

Impact area	Sub-impact	Unit of measurement	Achieved	Total social value
Employment, training and skills (Economic impact)	Local employment	Local FTEs (GVA <sup>2</sup> )	5,544.93	<b>£267,912,839</b>
Safety, health and wellbeing	Staff interventions to prevent harm	Life saving interventions (number of)	152	<b>£227,976,502</b>
Employment, training and skills	Learning interventions	Workforce training (hours)	512,615	<b>£85,103,610</b>
Climate and environment	Carbon	Operational greenhouse gas emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	230,170 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	<b>£57,082,160</b>
Economic development	Development impact	Value of developments or infrastructure (£)	£12,694,879	<b>£12,694,879</b>

The breakdown by sub-impact area for 2021-2022 below demonstrates how some of the values have changed.

Impact area	Sub-impact	Unit of measurement	Achieved	Total social value
Economic Impact (Employment, training and skills)	Local employment	Local FTEs (GVA)	5,142.92	<b>£211,587,419</b>
Employment, training and skills	Learning interventions	Workforce training (hours)	275,338	<b>£176,215,770</b>
Safety, health and wellbeing	Staff interventions to prevent harm	Life saving interventions (number of)	280	<b>£116,698,125</b>
Climate and environment	Carbon	Operational greenhouse gas emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	209,193 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	<b>£51,864,736</b>
Supply chain capacity	SMEs	SME supply chain spend (£)	£35,702,027	<b>£35,702,027</b>

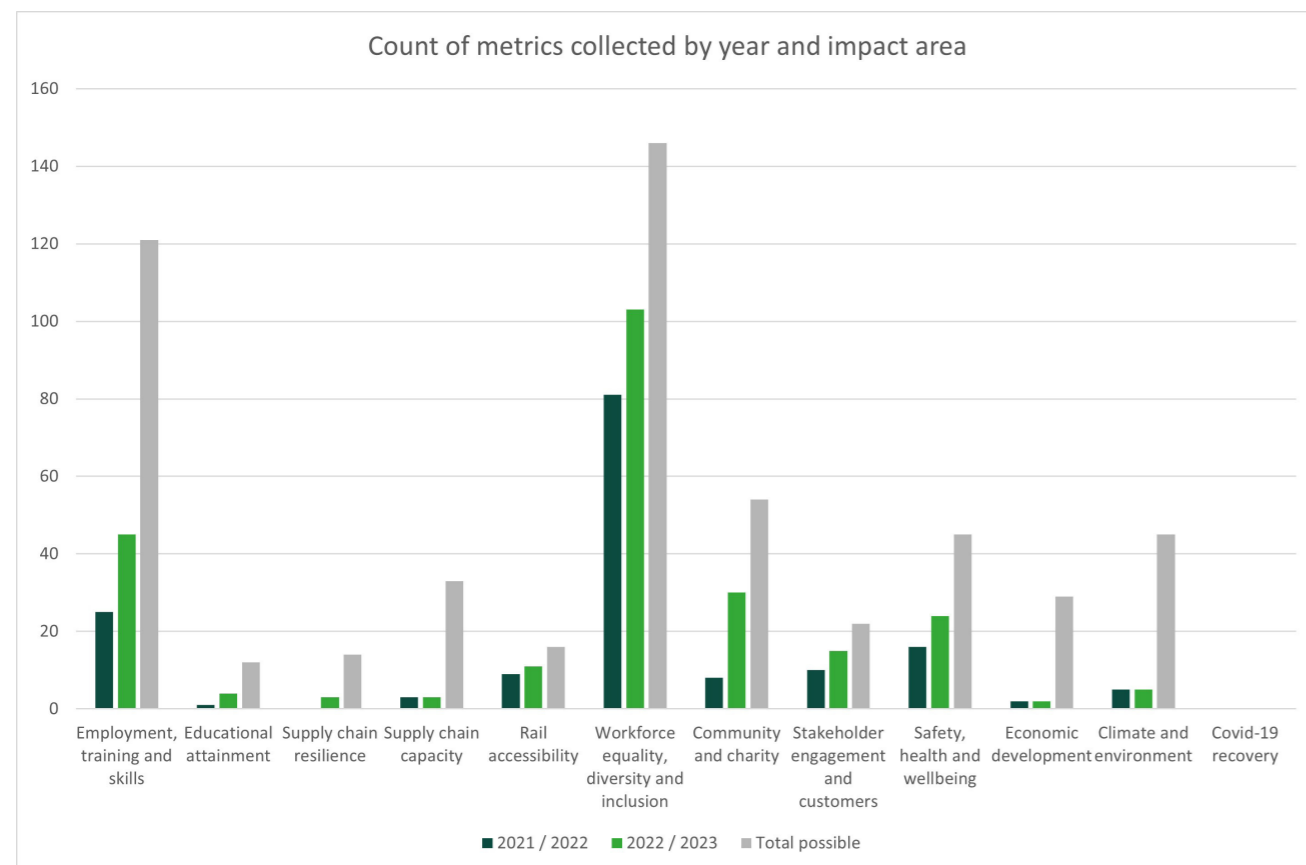
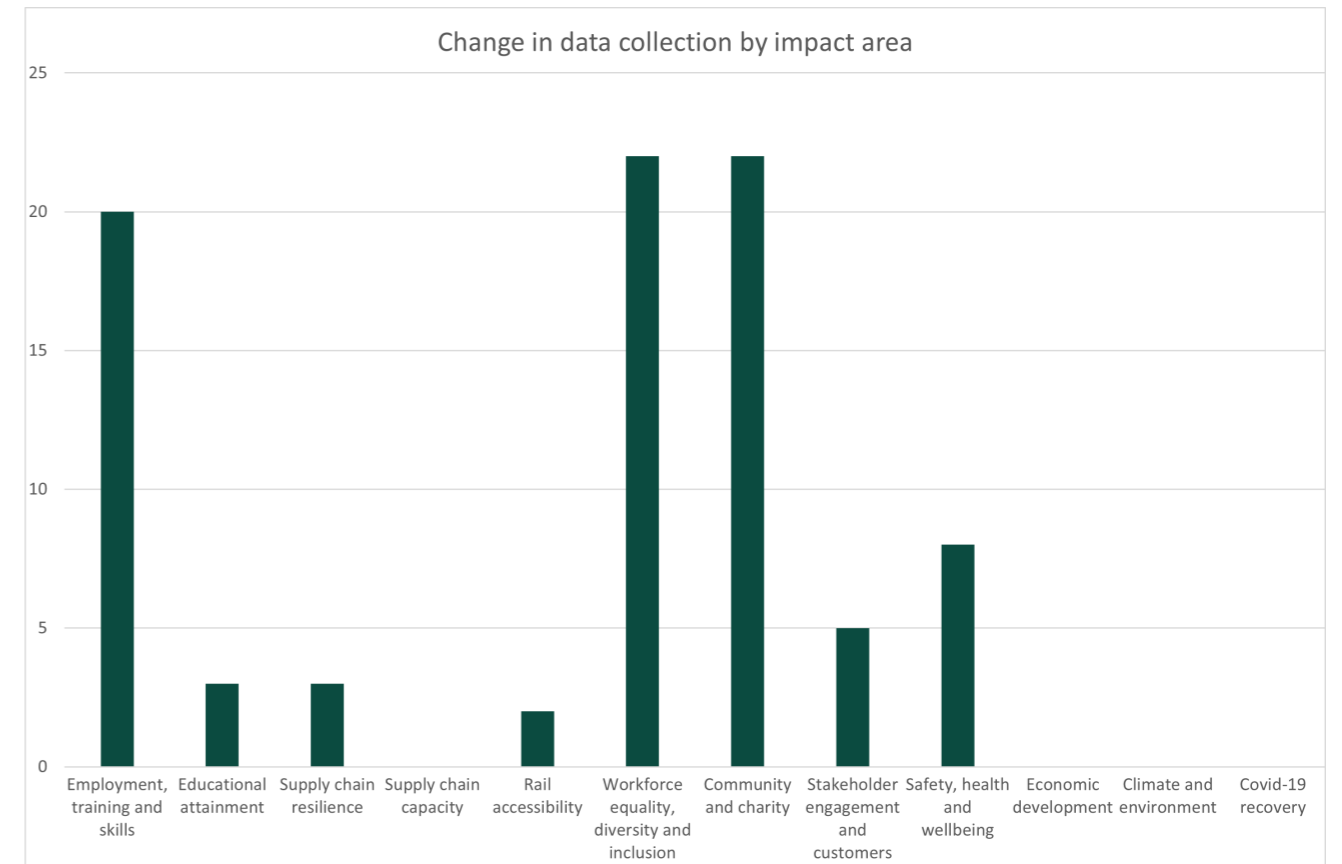
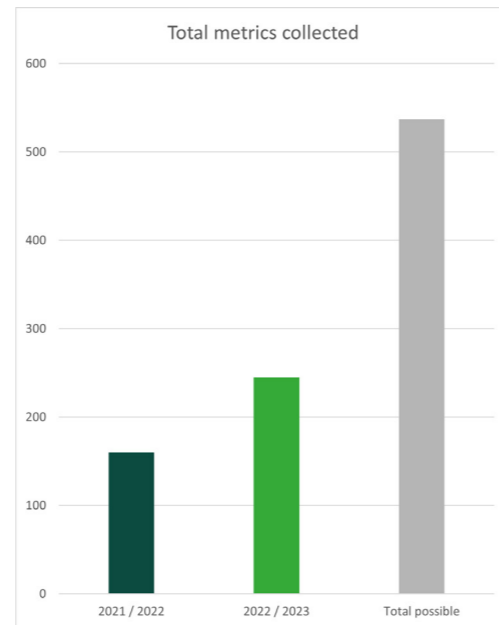
<sup>2</sup> Gross Value Added (GVA) is an economic productivity metric that measures the contribution of a company or municipality to an economy, producer, sector or region.

# Benchmarking and continuous improvement

Compared with 2021-2022, GWR has made significant strides in enhancing its data collection, reporting an additional 85 metrics across the 12 impact areas for 2022-2023.<sup>3,4</sup>

Through completing this social value assessment, we have deepened our understanding of what social value means for us across our operations. An increase in the scope of our data collection across the majority of areas has allowed us to build a clearer picture of impact, which has led us to delve into an extensive analysis of our strengths, areas for improvement, and additional opportunities.

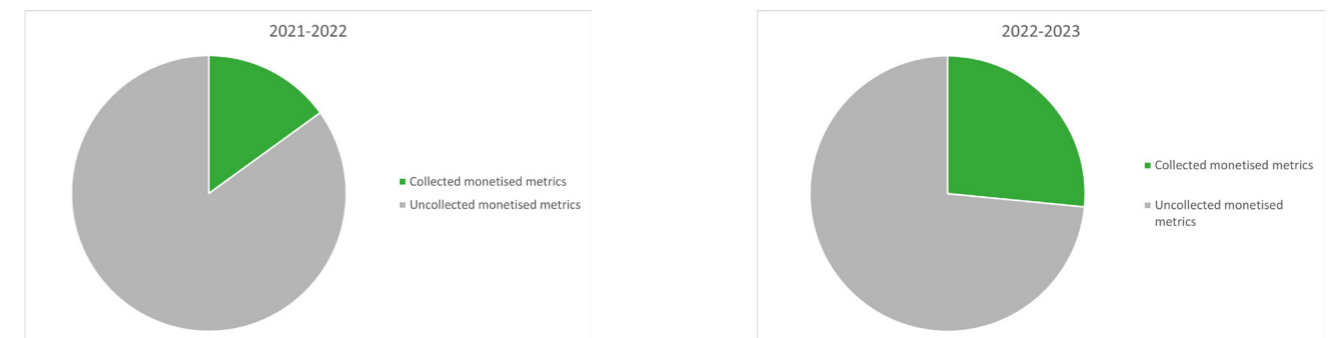
Whilst being able to present our impacts in financial terms is useful, our real drive is to understand impacts in human terms i.e. what changes people are experiencing as a result of our activities. Seeking to understand these changes is guiding our future approach, detailed further within the 'Future aims and measures' section of this report.



## Monetised metrics

We want to present our social impact in a way that drives meaningful change. Whilst it is hugely important to understand how our actions affect people's lives, we also recognise that showing the economic value of these changes helps make a stronger case for future social initiatives. Having a blend of monetised and non-monetised metrics allows us to achieve this.

The proportion of RSVT monetised metrics GWR has been able to collect has increased dramatically from 15% in 2021-2022 to 27% in 2022-2023.

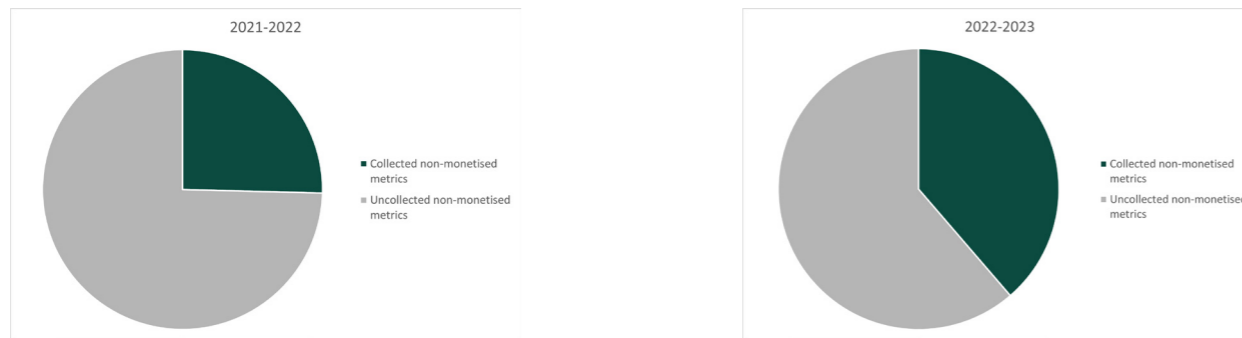


Areas where we have been able to improve our data collection include community volunteering, community use of space and station adoption, station / route crime, careers advice and curriculum support, apprentices, job creation and loss for those in minority groups and areas of deprivation, mentoring, inclusive design features and training for those with disabilities and under-represented groups.

<sup>3</sup> 21 metrics within 'workforce equality, diversity and inclusion', 'employment, training and skills' and 'community and charity', were not uploaded to the tool due to tool errors or already being counted elsewhere.  
<sup>4</sup> Although there are over 500 metrics within the RSVT, RSSB has instructed that users should only report on those that are relevant to the organisation.

## Non-monetised metrics

Similarly, the proportion of non-monetised metrics GWR has been able to collect has increased from 25% in 2021-2022 to 39% in 2022-2023.



Areas where we have been able to improve our data collection include community volunteering and initiatives, charitable giving and fundraising, apprenticeships, green jobs, supporting adults into work, complaints management, supply chain payments, training for those with disabilities, diversity reporting, parental leave, Net Promoter Score (NPS) and equal pay.

## Delivering a positive social impact

### 1.0 Employment, training and skills

#### Colleagues

We are committed to making GWR a great place to work and one where our colleagues reach their full potential. We've maintained our Investors in People Gold certification, demonstrating our performance in leading, supporting and improving our people. In 2022, GWR received a Highly Commended recognition for the 'Great Place to Work' Award at the National Rail Awards.



Colleague engagement and satisfaction is regularly reviewed, and we are constantly looking for ways to improve our reward and recognition programme, ensuring we retain the best talent and attract a diverse workforce. GWR even goes so far as to mandate exit interviews to better understand why colleagues leave and how to improve retention. In the reporting period, the turnover of staff at GWR was limited to 5.45%, significantly below the national average.

#### Apprenticeships

Our award-winning apprenticeship delivery remains as strong as ever. Spanning 2,000 miles of the network, we strive to exceed expectations and evolve our provision to ensure it remains at the forefront of the industry.

Our apprentice team are considered industry-leading, having delivered over 53,000 training hours in the year.

#### GWR Apprentice Team pioneers online invigilation with Exeter College

Always looking to improve the apprenticeship experience for GWR colleagues, the GWR apprentice team trialed a new invigilation process with Exeter College for functional skills exams. The process replaces the need for apprentices to travel to Exeter for the exam. Instead, they can use a laptop at their home depot, whilst their exam is invigilated online. This is first time online invigilation has ever been agreed with any further education establishment in the country.

These hours comprise 21 programmes at different levels (2-5), with 282 apprentices attending a rolling annual programme. Completion rates stand at a staggering 90.4%, 30% higher than the national average, continually providing a pipeline of new talent for the industry.

GWR also delivers the Duke of Edinburgh Business Gold programme to Customer Service and Engineering young apprentices.

"Since becoming an apprentice with GWR I feel I have developed in far more ways other than job related skills. I have made friends with the others in my cohort and have met so many lovely staff on our rotations... I also have made great achievements through the D of E residential in North Devon, such as overcoming my fear of heights on the climbing wall and high ropes. I've gained invaluable skills through the first aid and swimming week, becoming a more confident swimmer, and learning very important first aid skills such as CPR... I am so happy I applied to be a GWR apprentice as this has been some of the best months of my life."

#### Ashely Bere, Customer Service Apprentice

GWR is also committed to upskilling its existing colleagues through apprenticeships.

"Undertaking the Mentor Apprenticeship with GWR was a simple decision for me, I wanted to improve on my existing skills in mentoring within Engineering, and bring them forward a couple of decades to look at building good future engineers or even possibly my own replacement. As part of the course I've had to complete functional skills, including Maths, English and ICT. The sound of those words can send shivers down any spine of anyone who was last in a school environment over 45 years ago, when the only computer was a Casio watch and a Texas Instruments calculator! Working with the GWR Exeter College adult learning support team I quickly realised that I wasn't alone. Never one to give up, I've had a few disappointments but the online exam journey continues as does the support, which is excellent."

#### Mark Walsh, Engineering Apprentice Training Manager, GWR

GWR is consistently recognised for its leading approach. In November 2022, Investors in People conducted a thorough assessment of our apprenticeship programmes, which culminated in GWR achieving the Gold Standard for the We Invest in Apprentices accreditation.



"Congratulations, this is an excellent achievement for any organisation, but given the challenges facing the sector through Covid, industrial action and political uncertainty, this is exceptional."

#### Investors in People

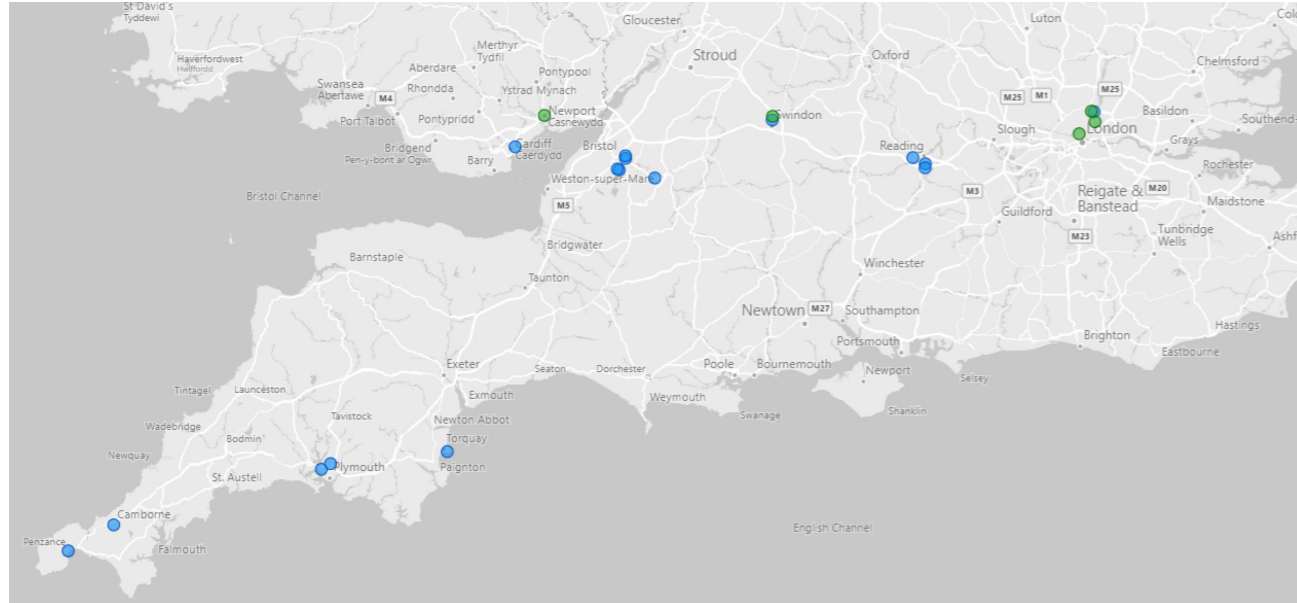
"Fantastic news... Well done to you and the team. I don't think it was ever in doubt to be honest. Your programme is exceptional !!"

#### Mike Blakeley, Director of Future Skills and Apprenticeships, Exeter College

The team has also been recognised at the Rail Business Awards (Highly Commended), National Rail Awards (highly commended), as well as winning the Association of Colleges prestigious Beacon Award for outstanding partnership and engagement with Exeter College.

## Levelling Up

The Sustainable Rail Blueprint's Social Value Route Map highlights that rail plays a significant role in supporting the Levelling Up agenda. To illustrate the impact of our apprenticeship programme, we have mapped our apprentices against areas of deprivation, demonstrating where we are making opportunities accessible to those who will benefit most.



- Apprentices located within the highest areas of deprivation (top 10%)
- Apprentices located within the second highest areas of deprivation (top 20%)

Mapped against the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD, 2019) and Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)

Our recruitment for apprentices looks right across the geographical areas of our business and we continue to engage with those areas of greater need to understand what we can do to help and promote our apprenticeships.

## 2.0 Educational attainment

### Supporting schools and colleges

Our approach to supporting schools and colleges is providing young people with exciting opportunities for development, work experience and qualifications within the rail sector. It is also helping GWR colleagues to understand how we can make our business more engaging and accessible to the next generation.

We work with the National Schools Partnership, helping us to connect with young people and their families, as well as maintaining outreach programmes with local not-for-profit organisations to actively reach out to diverse communities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, in the reporting period we have delivered school safety talks to 3,539 young people.

GWR also supports Junior Life Skills, Prison Me No Way and the Junior Citizens programme in Oxford, which was recently nominated for Team of the Year at the Community Safety Services 2022 Awards.

“The Strategic Leadership Team recognised and acknowledged the significant work undertaken by you all to re-introduce the Junior Citizens messaging to Year 6 pupils from schools across the County post the pandemic along with the work to refresh the centre, update some of the messaging and ensure that vital safety education was delivered to up to 5,000 pupils in the past year.”

**Rob MacDougall, Director of Community Safety and Chief Fire Officer, Oxfordshire County Council**

### Prison Me No Way

Prison Me No Way (PMNW) provides real-life learning experiences for children and young people between the ages of 8 and 18, helping them make positive choices that keep them from becoming involved in crime, stay safe and realise their full potential.

GWR supports this initiative by visiting local schools to deliver impactful talks that enable the young people to fully understand the dangers of the railway and that they can always approach teachers, railway staff and the British Transport Police.

Presentations are aimed at students who range from 13-16 years of age, with different educational and social backgrounds. The talks cover trespass, third rail and overhead lines, the impact of social media, county lines, anti-social behaviour, fare evasion and suicide prevention.

Last year, GWR supported 1,115 students through these talks. Teachers commented positively about the honest and hard-hitting nature of the talks which the students really engaged with and appreciated.



# Junior Life Skills

## GWR empowers Cornish youth with life-saving skills

### The context

Junior Life Skills teaches a variety of important life skills to children, including fire prevention, CPR and beach, road and rail safety, however it had ceased to be delivered by local agencies in Cornwall due to lack of funding. This left a life skills gap for young people growing up in Cornwall. GWR recognised the importance of the life skills being delivered and so began an initiative to restart the programme, in partnership with the Cornwall Fire Service who provide the venue and help to coordinate the events.

### The solution

GWR approached a variety of agencies who deliver life skills sessions, to gain their support in restarting the project. We worked on a plan to deliver sessions across Cornwall to maximise the impact across the region, contacting local schools to invite them to the event. Due to the limited availability of school funds, providing the event for free was key. We also developed further information that is sent to schools for the children to share with their families.

### The impact

We now run events at 8 locations, over 16 days throughout the academic year. Being able to practice certain skills in this environment, such as CPR, really helps with information retention and could potentially save lives in the future. The scheme has gained momentum and now includes sessions on environmental topics, such as sustainable transport. The schools' responses have been amazing, rebooking for the following year and commenting on how the children are learning key life skills that they do not receive elsewhere, a testament to the importance of what we are delivering. Our relationships with the agencies are also developing, working together to maximise what we deliver, including showcasing GWR and the agencies to help children to think about their potential future careers.



"It's a great piece of work and it is very evident that if GWR didn't support it with funds but, more importantly, without people like Adele then it would not happen. Well done! I love what you are doing there, I didn't realise it has so many agencies involved including an internet safety officers' session. I really have got a picture this week of a company that cares about its passengers and cares about the communities it travels through. Thank you for your continued hard work and the support you give to those around you."

**Andrew McCullough, British Transport Police**

# Platform

## Elevating rail education and sustainable behaviours

### The context

Platform is a GWR-funded Community Rail education scheme that invests in future generations and raises climate awareness. The scheme was developed collaboratively between Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) Severnside, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and TransWilts, to deliver in-school workshops, encourage schools and pupils to use the railway, and create bespoke, rail-related resources that link to the curriculum.

### The solution

Consultants Sustainable Hive were commissioned to undertake a feasibility study, embedding specialist sustainable education insights throughout the business case. As a result, funding for an 18-month pilot was secured through GWR, CrossCountry and the Community Rail Development Fund. The delivery team created 26 bespoke lessons, contacted more than 200 schools within walking distance of stations, presented at numerous meetings and offered continuing professional development (CPD) sessions for teachers. They liaised with local authorities in all seven of the counties covered by the scheme and forged partnerships with other education providers. By March 2023, the team had delivered workshops and assemblies to 5,399 students, with 1,961 young people also taking part in 78 rail familiarisation visits. The project website had 3,221 registered users, with 642 lessons downloaded.

### The impact

After what was described as "outstanding" enthusiasm and uptake from schools, the project was extended to incorporate local authority Holiday and Food Programme schemes, with bookings at capacity in summer 2022. The project also won first place at the annual Community Rail Awards in the Influencing Positive Change and Sustainability category. The collaborative approach has since fostered several new joint CRP projects, and all partners are committed to continuing and building the scheme, promoting sustainable and healthy behaviours among young people by engaging them in accessible, interactive, and meaningful ways.



Image: Whitehall Primary School

## 3.0 Supply chain resilience and capacity

GWR is strongly committed to supporting the small and medium businesses who are an integral part of our supply chain and who help to drive local economic growth and support local employment. In the reporting period, we have worked with over 1,147 suppliers, 64% of which are SMEs.

Our work to improve sustainable procurement practices continues and we have published a refreshed Sustainable Procurement Policy that details our commitments and ambitions, as well as what we expect from our supply chain partners to enable success through collaboration.

We have also re-assessed our current approach against ISO 20400, the International Standard for Sustainable Procurement, and are pleased to have been able to evidence a significant improvement from last year.

### Advancing our strategy for a sustainable supply chain

#### GWR achieves 'mature' status in ISO20400 re-assessment

##### The context

In April 2021, GWR commissioned its first ISO20400 assessment. The assessment achieved a good outcome, however, we knew we had further work to do. Taking the recommendations provided, we aspired to truly bring them to life and fully embed the good policies and processes we had developed.

##### The solution

We firstly took steps to refresh our Sustainable Procurement Policy, now published on our external site, which crucially now includes clear and SMART targets, against which we can challenge our supply chain to deliver. We also contributed to the GWR Decarbonisation Roadmap, identifying the ways in which we hope to improve our sustainable procurement objectives, as well as enhancing other initiatives, such as the internal Contract Management guide e-library, which helps give contract managers clear information on how to use the contract.

##### The impact

Following a re-assessment, with the results delivered in March 2023, we were delighted to achieve a significant improvement against the ISO20400 framework, reflecting the hard work we had done throughout the year. GWR is now recognised as a 'mature' organisation in this field, progressing our strategy and achieving further clarity on our next steps.

"It has been a real turning point for us to move away from simply drafting a process and getting it published to digging deep as to how we bring sustainable procurement commitments to life in our tenders, contracts and KPIs. We are now challenging ourselves and others to use the framework, but ensuring each scenario is considered on its own merits."

**Laura Daniel, Head of Procurement, GWR**

## 4.0 Rail accessibility

GWR has a responsibility to provide easy and convenient mobility, so the railway can be accessed and used by as many people as possible, regardless of age, gender and disability.

Working with our partners, we aim to provide the smoothest door-to-door journeys possible, improving the integration of different methods of transport such as rail and bus links along with improved walking routes, increased car parking at key locations and investing in bike storage facilities. In the reporting period, GWR has conducted 72 Diversity Impact Assessments and spent over £479k on new inclusive design features.

To ensure our services are accessible to all, our fleet has been modified to comply with 'Persons of Reduced Mobility National Technical Specification for Interoperability' (NTSN PRM), working with manufacturers to ensure new trains provide the best accessibility for our customers.

We also offer a Passenger Assist service to those who require help to get on and off the train or while moving around stations. In the reporting period, 89% of those asked were satisfied with their ability to get to / access the facilities and services they needed.

"Passenger assistance was excellent. I was met before I left the train and was assisted off the train to the taxi rank outside the station. The passenger assistant stayed with me and helped me into the taxi with my luggage. Once again I was assisted with courtesy and respect." Customer feedback

Currently, 31% of GWR stations are considered completely step free (Office of Rail and Road category A stations). Many of our stations do have a degree of step free access, however, and we are working to make small infrastructure enhancements at stations to improve accessibility for customers. We also contribute to the Rail Delivery Group accessibility network map to help passengers understand which journeys are best for them.

New for this year, 500 GWR colleagues completed continuing professional development (CPD) accredited Autism in Transport training. All new starters also undertake accessibility training at induction.

### Accessibility Panel

At GWR we have revamped our Accessibility Panel. This panel consists of various disabled customers and disability groups that help advise GWR on future projects and initiatives we introduce.

The panel meets monthly and has a key focus on ensuring any new projects are designed to incorporate all our passengers despite the barriers disabled people face.

The Accessibility Panel has already played a key part in helping us design our new disability awareness training for the business. The training brings the lived experiences from members of our Accessibility Panel to life, demonstrating the impact that our colleagues can have on customers.



Accessibility panel meeting

# National Autism Accreditation

## GWR takes steps to provide an autism-friendly service

### The context

GWR is one of ten transport operators across the whole of the UK to undergo an assessment to become autism-friendly certified by the National Autistic Society (NAS). Achieving accreditation proves that an organisation is committed to understanding autism and setting the standard for autism practice. To obtain this internationally recognised quality standard, GWR is required to review and improve its services, information and environments with regard to accessibility.

### The solution

As part of the accreditation, 600 colleagues along our Plymouth-to-Penzance route are currently completing autism awareness training through the NAS platform. In addition, several GWR initiatives have been launched including sensory packs, emergency sensory support, guides to travelling, virtual station tours, 'sound bites', assistance cards and an expansion on our offer of awareness trips ('Try a Train').

### The impact

For GWR, delivering an autism-friendly travel experiences remains a priority for the year ahead. Consequently, we will continue to work on our recently launched projects while monitoring our mystery shopper reports, accessibility panel, and overall assisted travel feedback to make targeted improvements.



In addition, we've been working with the local community, hosting events and initiatives to raise people's confidence in rail travel, particularly for families and vulnerable groups. In the reporting period we have supported 2,281 people to use the rail network, through our 'Try a Train' initiative.

## Try a Train

### Boosting confidence and independence

#### The context

Many disabled people are unaware of the opportunities available to help them travel by train. There are a number of barriers to travel but the main challenge is usually confidence in knowing what to do and how to access the railway.

#### The solution

To help build this confidence in travel, GWR offers 'Try a Train' trips. These trips focus on providing a real lived experience of travelling by train. This is done with a member of GWR staff who provides details on safe travel and options available to help.

### The impact

The difference this initiative makes to individuals in their ability to be independent and travel safely is huge. For example, because of Try a Train trips we have been told of young people accessing further education opportunities by train, that they had previously rejected, as they had no means of travel.

"Thank you for all your support and allowing our young people to experience things they normally wouldn't, whilst also helping develop their confidence, self-esteem and take positive steps towards their prep for adulthood."

**Teacher, Mendip School**

## 5.0 Workforce equality, diversity and inclusion

GWR celebrates diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive working environment that is representative of the communities we serve.

Over the past 12 months we have focused on creating a more inclusive culture across GWR, including adjusting our recruitment activities to attract a more diverse workforce, supporting outreach programmes, and providing formal training and progression opportunities for our employees.

### Recruitment

At GWR, our aim is to build a diverse and inclusive team that can better serve our customers and communities. We have set ourselves ambitious targets to increase gender diversity and in 5 years reach an overall ethnicity target of 9.15% (just short of 10.4% which is representative of our communities).<sup>5</sup> We use specialist job boards to attract a wider range of candidates, promoting role models from underrepresented groups and providing documents in alternative formats to accommodate different needs. We also ensure that shortlists are split 50/50 by gender and include 20% ethnic minority candidates. We ensure diverse interview panels to reduce bias in the selection process and all hiring managers receive interview training to help them identify the best candidates based on skills and experience.

<sup>5</sup>As per ONS data

### Empowering young minds: GWR donates children's books to promote diversity and art

In the reporting period, GWR donated 650 books to 25 schools across its network. The books donated were 'My Mummy is a Train Driver,' a children's book promoting gender diversity and 'The World Reimagined: A Poetic Journey of Discovery,' a collection of poetry put together by an art education programme that GWR supported with funding.

"The books have gone down a treat. We had some spare so passed them on to our sister secondary school, so now there are over 250 staff and children benefiting from them. It makes me proud that ethnic minorities are represented so well in the arts and a concerted effort is being made to expose our children to material like this, so a massive kudos to your team. Hopefully, this marks just the beginning of a positive mutual relationship."

**Abdullah Patel, Deputy Head Teacher from Al-Ashraf Primary School**



Lara Esfahani, GWR Head of HR Operations (left), presenting "My Mummy is a Train Driver" and "The World Reimagined" books

Our efforts in the past 2-years demonstrate our success, with 23% of applications being women and 31% ethnically diverse colleagues. We have also seen a significant increase in the percentages of new hires, 36% women and 12% ethnically diverse.

### Outreach

Our outreach programmes help us to connect with a myriad of community groups, working with long-term unemployed adults through The Prince's Trust and with young people with mobility impairments or learning difficulties through Whizz Kids and Mencap.

GWR in partnership with Never Mind the Gap, an initiative that helps get more women into rail, provided work experience for 6 unemployed female delegates. We also worked with The Prince's Trust to deliver a programme to 10 young unemployed people.

"Being part of The Prince's Trust programme allowed me to highlight GWR at its best to young people. It was an exciting journey which consisted of engaging learning, expanding young people's geographical knowledge, building their confidence and a way of showing what it feels like to be part of a supportive business. Princes Trust has played a huge part in my teenage life, when my family came to UK as refugees in 2005. I felt invested in the support I provided to young people, and the success of this programme has been a personal thank you to Princess Trust for all the work they have done for me, when I needed an opportunity."

**Ekaterina Cherkasenko, Coach and Mentor, GWR**



## Never Mind the Gap

### Helping women in Swindon get their careers back on track

#### The context

In 2019, Women in Rail developed a cross-industry initiative to help women who are unemployed get their careers back on track through the provision of work experience. In response to this initiative, GWR launched a Never Mind the Gap programme in October 2022 in collaboration with Women in Rail.

#### The solution

GWR provided a 3-week work experience programme, which included classroom-based training for one week and placements in Milford House (GWR), Western House (GWR/ Network Rail), and Swindon Station for the remaining two weeks. Six volunteers from the Swindon community participated, gaining valuable experience across various roles in the organisation. A mentor programme was also provided afterwards to support the women into employment.



#### The impact

Placement Managers who supported the delegates provided excellent feedback, and the delegates now have updated CVs, interview skills and references that they can use to gain employment. All delegates also completed a first aid qualification, which is an excellent skill to take forward for job applications.

"This programme was the first of its kind for GWR and I felt really privileged to be a part of it. It enabled the women involved to have a practical and real understanding of the industry that we work in. The mentoring scheme allowed our own colleagues to undertake training and experience in this area, which is great for their own development. We have recently recruited one of the graduates of the scheme who is now working within our On Board Services Team"

**Valerie Pope, ACMS & eDepot Development Manager / Co- Chair Women in Rail, GWR**

## Culture

GWR is committed to promoting an inclusive, diverse culture, and taking concrete steps to make this happen. We support our colleagues who run a number of internal staff network groups that promote inclusion, including Aspect (LGBTQ+), Reach (Ethnicity), Women in Rail, Young Rail Professionals, Christian Rail Association and Disability Working Group.

In the reporting period, 24 women looking for career progression have completed our Step Up / Step Forward training programme, while 10 of our ethnically diverse colleagues have undertaken Reach Up and Reach Forward training programmes. In addition, GWR offers 'lunch and learns' and reverse mentoring programmes to provide opportunities for colleagues to gain an understanding of different cultures and perspectives. Of those who attended development programmes, over 37% of women and 28% of ethnically diverse colleagues have already been promoted.

The percentage of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in leadership positions in GWR is 5.89%, whilst the number of women in leadership positions has increased by 4.76% to 28.16%.

## White Ribbon

GWR has signed the White Ribbon pledge, as a commitment to take action to prevent and address domestic violence and abuse. To commemorate the company becoming White Ribbon UK Accredited, we marked White Ribbon Day (Friday 25 November 2022) with a new train livery. GWR now has 50 champions and ambassadors for the initiative, and has created a 3-year action plan, beginning with launching a Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy. We have also created a guidance pack for both managers and colleagues respectively.



Great Western Railway unveils White Ribbon train

## Getaway

### Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership's project wins top honours for inclusivity

#### The context

With funding from GWR and CrossCountry, Gloucestershire CRP worked with two community organisations, The Friendship Cafe, and The Music Works, to open up rural spaces to younger members of Gloucestershire's ethnically-diverse community.

#### The solution

Ten day trips were delivered as part of the project, engaging 117 young people in 38 inspiring new experiences to expand their horizons, learn new skills, and gain confidence and independence through rail travel. These included canoeing, farming, bushcraft, mountain biking, and outdoor cooking. The 16-25 year olds also created vlogs for online platforms, encouraging others to take up new activities and develop their own creative skills.

## The impact

The project was recognised at the 2022 Community Rail Awards, winning the Involving Diverse Groups award.

"We are so proud of the team and want to thank our community and rail industry partners for making our Getaway programme possible. Putting diversity and inclusion at the centre of our work is a priority for GCRP and winning the Community Rail Award for Involving Diverse Groups showcases our commitment to diversifying rural spaces. We hope this will inspire others to do the same."

**Hannah McDonnell, Executive Director, Gloucestershire CRP**

## 6.0 Community and charity

From the incredible work our Community Rail Partnerships have been doing to meet the needs of deprived families to our Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCI Fund) which last year supported 83 projects across the GWR network, we are making a difference in people's lives within the areas in which we operate.

### Fundraising and charitable giving

We continue to increase our colleague engagement in Payroll Giving, which allows our staff to give monthly to charity, tax-free. This year the percentage of GWR colleagues donating via payroll giving increased from 7.9% to 8.1%, donating over £58k to charity, a £17k increase compared with the last reporting period. Our culture of giving back, engaging colleagues, and making a positive social impact is recognised in GWR maintaining its Silver Quality Mark, awarded to companies with over 5% of their colleague base donating through Payroll Giving. In February 2023 we were also awarded a five star accreditation award from Payroll Giving in Action. This is the highest level of accreditation and was granted for the efforts we have made to promote the payroll giving scheme to colleagues.

GWR match funds any staff fundraising up to £200 per colleague per year. In the reporting period we paid £7,732 in match funding directly to registered charities. We also donated £15,446.80 of lost money found on the network to charity.

In the reporting period, GWR invested over £1.4m in projects across the network, supporting customers, charities, community groups and voluntary organisations to deliver benefit in the communities we serve through the CCI Fund and our Community Rail Partnerships Major Projects Fund.

### Delay Repay

GWR runs a scheme called Delay Repay, which provides compensation for customers who have been delayed by 15 minutes or more, typically refunded via an application through the GWR website. Now however, customers can choose instead to divert funds directly to Samaritans and Railway Children. Testament to the generosity of our customers, in the reporting period, 2,613 claims were donated to charity, totaling £32,869.



### Community Rail Partnerships

Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) bring together local groups and stakeholder partners along railway lines to deliver a range of community engagement and promotional activities. GWR works with 11 CRPs on our network and their work encompasses initiatives such as promoting the railway as a career option and targeting under-privileged and diverse communities delivering rail confidence activities. We are incredibly proud of the work they do. All new CRP Officers and new Rail Education Officers are offered GWR courses such as personal track safety, introduction to sign language, first aid and disability awareness training. In the reporting period, 9 different people attended 4 different GWR courses at no cost to themselves.

### Space for community use

In the reporting period GWR spent £4,000 on making spaces and facilities available for community use. The old signal box at Bere Alston, lovingly restored in previous years, is now used regularly by Bere Alston Scouts who have adopted the station. GWR has 29 station adoption groups across the network and, in the reporting period, community volunteers have spent 3,870 hours participating in these groups.

### Crimestoppers

One charity we supported this year was Crimestoppers, who use the power of drama and stage to help reduce crime. A grant of £35,000 provided a series of drama-based workshops for 450 pupils across 9 primary schools, exploring the anonymous reporting of crime and early intervention to grooming for gang crime, particularly in relation to the railway and county lines. The initiative culminated with pupils delivering stage performances to showcase what they had learned.

### A financial boost to overcome homelessness

In the reporting period, GWR grant-funded a contactless tap and go terminal donation scheme in the Oxford and Reading areas with a charity called Greater Change. As a direct result of the donations made via the terminals, Greater Change has supported 14 people (one with children) to move from temporary accommodation to secure housing, one person from rough sleeping to secure housing and one person from rough sleeping to temporary accommodation.

## Chinese New Year at Reading Station

### Community funding ignites cultural celebration

#### The context

The South Gloucestershire Chinese Association (SGCA) aims to bring together the Chinese community living, working or studying in the area, to identify and meet their needs through a variety of projects and activities in association with different organisations and service providers. SGCA Secretary Rong Yang came up with an idea to showcase Chinese culture in the region, by publicly celebrating the Chinese New Year through dance.

#### The solution

Through support from GWR's community budget, which supports seasonal events across the Great Western network, the SGCA received £965 to fund dance teaching and provide a space for the group to meet.



### The impact

On Saturday 31 January 2023, passengers at Reading Station were treated to a flash mob of 27 dancers from South Gloucestershire Chinese Association (SGCA) taking part in a traditional Chinese dragon dance. The dance, celebrating the start of the Chinese New Year on Sunday 22 January 2023, also referred to as Lunar New Year, has a history of more than 2,000 years and is believed to bring good fortune. Projects like these are a great way to get the local community involved and help amplify the voices of underrepresented groups across our network.



"With the great support from GWR and Network Rail, members of South Gloucestershire Chinese Association headed to Reading station to perform in a fantastic flash mob. There was also a mix of traditional and modern dances, Tai Chi demonstrations, and above all, a mighty dragon dance show. If you were in Reading, we hoped you enjoyed a truly unforgettable cultural experience."

**Rong Yang, Secretary, SGCA**

## Great Western Society Grub Hub

### Addressing social need by bringing joy and wholesome meals to deprived families in Didcot

#### The context

In the Didcot area, the Great Western Society (GWS) recognised the need to support deprived local families and applied for support through the GWR CCI Fund to create the 'Grub Hub'. The project aimed to address the financial constraints faced by these families by providing them with a memorable experience at the Didcot Railway Centre, a living steam museum with a café and expansive grounds, alongside a nourishing midday meal.

### The solution

The project organised three special events: the Teddy Bears' Picnic, Princesses and Superheroes Day, and Apple Pressing with Sustainable Didcot. On each event day, the Didcot Railway Centre was closed to regular visitors, allowing the participating families to enjoy exclusive access to the facilities and activities. The GWS collaborated with various partners, including Didcot Library and Homestart, to enhance the experience for the families. Halal food was arranged for Afghan refugees, and extra meals were provided to the Afghan community. They also provided food for Ukrainian refugee families.

### The impact

Over 460 individuals, primarily drawn from welfare groups, churches, and schools, benefited from the project. These families, many of whom considered it their only family day out of the year, expressed gratitude for the experience and the free meals provided. The project received overwhelming praise from participants, highlighting the positive impact it had on their well-being and creating cherished memories. With a dedicated team of 50 volunteers at each event, the Grub Hub not only brought joy to families but also fostered a sense of community. The success of this initiative has inspired GWS to continue similar outreach events to meet the growing demand and support local communities facing financial hardships.



"My children and I had a wonderful time and I am so grateful for the free lunch which was my kids' favourite food! As a single mum of three on benefits, the school holidays were really getting me down, and I have been crying for nearly a week now... until today, when I realised that people do care and have volunteered their whole day for this event. So THANK YOU. You have really lifted my spirits and my children are exhausted, so an early night and a happy mum. I am very, very grateful."

### Community feedback

## 7.0 Stakeholder engagement and customers

### Stakeholders and customers

With such a large network and wide array of partners and stakeholders, we work hard to build strong regional relationships. In the reporting period, circa 4,472 stakeholders attended GWR consultation and engagement events.

GWR helps more than 100 million passengers reach their destination every year, operating nearly 200 stations and serving South Wales, the Cotswolds, London and the South West. Our Customer and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy enables us to develop an in-depth and accurate understanding of the needs and aspirations of our customers and stakeholders. We currently employ over 30 Customer Ambassadors, dedicated staff who assist customers at stations with the latest travel information, including supporting those who need extra help with their journey.

### Feedback and communication

The data for this report has been collected during a year of significant disruption to services, due to industrial action and major changes in the UK economy. GWR has continued to promote clear and open channels of communication, encouraging regular feedback through surveys, social media and customer service channels, taking on board suggestions for improvements. Compared with 2021, stakeholder satisfaction with information provided during periods of disruption has increased from 63% to 67% and, despite the number of complaints increasing, in the reporting period we resolved over 97% of all complaints within 20 days of being received, which is a 17% improvement from last year. The proportion of stakeholders who rated their interactions with GWR as good or very good in 2022 was 74%, and 70% of people agreed that GWR is committed to delivering the best quality service to passengers.

In the reporting period we've received 872 communications of positive feedback from stakeholders.

### Poppies to Paddington marks 40 years since the Falklands conflict

GWR's third 'Poppies to Paddington' operation on Remembrance Day 2022 paid special tribute to the Falklands conflict. Hundreds of wreaths, including wreaths from SSAFA (The Armed Forces Charity) branches across the South West and Wales, were taken to the capital by train on 11 November as GWR once again joined forces with The Veterans Charity.



# Pay As You Go

## GWR extends contactless ticketing on further branch lines

### The context

Building on the success of contactless ticketing between London Paddington and Reading, in 2022 GWR brought the seamless convenience of contactless payments to the Thames Valley branch lines.



### The solution

Passengers can now effortlessly tap their way through the Windsor and Slough routes, as well as the Twyford to Henley and Maidenhead to Marlow lines, using any contactless payment method - from bank cards to Apple Pay and Android Pay. With a simple touch on the yellow reader at ticket gatelines, the journey becomes effortless and stress-free.

### The impact

By introducing contactless payment options across these additional branch lines, GWR is supporting the recovery of local businesses and creating a thriving economy. Eliminating the need for paper tickets and outdated queues, the ease of traveling by train has been significantly enhanced, providing a boost to post-pandemic business recovery efforts.

# 8.0 Safety, health and wellbeing

## Safety and security

Safety is GWR's number one priority and we are committed to keeping our railway the safest in Europe. 92.4% of our stations are Secure Stations accredited, recognising how we are working with our partners to reduce crime and play a greater role in safeguarding vulnerable people. We achieve this through our well-trained frontline staff, physical design measures and stringent risk management procedures. In the period our staff have intervened 420 times to prevent harm, including 152 suicide interventions.



Testament to GWR's commitment to safety, in the reporting period we have achieved zero fatalities across the network.

We've also been awarded The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Gold award for the fifth consecutive year. This year we have positively reinforced the right conduct through our behavioural safety campaign "BeSafe," cascading our Golden Rules posters throughout the business.

This year, two GWR colleagues, Lucy Hayden and Matt Doyle, won the Life Saver award at the National Rail Awards. The award recognises the incredible acts of human bravery by members of staff who went above and beyond their everyday duties.

## Suicide prevention through station design

This year, GWR has worked with Network Rail to develop and deliver a suicide prevention scheme at Slough Station that segregates the main line platforms, enabling us to close them to the public and only open them when trains are due. This scheme went live in March this year.



## Health and wellbeing

Within the rail industry, shift patterns, demanding time frames, challenging working conditions and exposure to potentially distressing events means promoting good mental health amongst our workforce is fundamental. Our Wellbeing Steering Group brings together colleagues from across the network and from different functions, to share best practice and ideas. In the period, we've hosted 128 community health, wellbeing and welfare projects or interventions.

We use the Assessbook GWR learning portal to support our Mental Health First Aider training programme. As of the 31 March 2023, GWR had 64 Wellbeing Champions and 191 Health First Aiders. By the end of July, we will have provided refresher training to 64 colleagues and trained 32 new Mental Health First Aiders.



We also monitor and aim to improve employee attendance by implementing in-house Occupational Health and Wellbeing programmes. In the reporting period, 2,740 GWR colleagues benefitted from a health and wellbeing intervention.

In recognition of GWR's commitment to and positive impact on colleague welfare, our in-house Occupational Health team was shortlisted for the 2022 Personnel Today Awards for the Health and Wellbeing Award - Public Sector.

## Occupational Health Van

### GWR's mobile unit reaches remote stations to promote early intervention

#### The context

GWR's Occupational Health technicians take a mobile unit to various locations across the network, including our more remote stations, to offer health and wellbeing days. These involve blood pressure monitoring, cholesterol testing, diet and lifestyle advice, menopause support and signposting for many helpful organisations supporting mental health. Colleagues have the opportunity to identify health issues at an early stage and we offer continued care and support if appropriate.

#### The solution

Our Occupational Health team recently employed a mobile technician alongside in-clinic technicians. The mobile technician allows a further reach to remote colleagues and enables a much greater volume of wellbeing events, as the in-clinic technicians can continue with periodic medicals. In 2022, we took the mobile unit to most of the major stations in the West of England. In the last quarter, we visited 16 stations, offering health and wellbeing events reaching just shy of 200 colleagues. 50+ colleagues attended our Plymouth and Exeter events alone.

#### Wellbeing Activities that are fueling employee health and engagement

GWR is currently promoting a wellbeing walking challenge for teams of 10 colleagues to walk as far as they can on the longest road in the world from South Africa to Russia. We are organising a team rounders game, and the famous GWR football tournament will be held in Paddington again this summer. We are also teaming up with our staff networks to organise and promote further events to support colleagues in improving their wellbeing.

#### GWR and the DfT commission leading suicide prevention charity to conduct research

In 2022, GWR commissioned suicide prevention charity, Samaritans, to lead a new research study on mental health and wellbeing support for the rail industry, in partnership with Mental Health at Work. The study comes at a crucial time, and will provide good practise recommendations for mental health provision, so that the industry can raise awareness for colleagues and support those experiencing mental illness. It will aim to highlight existing barriers, as well as encourage a culture shift to destigmatise conversations around mental health.

#### The impact

The mobile unit has given us an excellent opportunity to showcase what it is that our Occupational Health team offers. It allows colleagues to access our Employee Assistance Programme and other external resources such as physio, Transport Benevolent Fund and Healthshield. In the last quarter we have undertaken 150 cholesterol checks, 15 of whom went on to see their GP on our recommendation. All colleagues who attended had a blood pressure check and 56 of these were offered advice on blood pressure monitoring due to a higher than normal reading. In order to continually improve our service, our team has recently begun to collect colleague feedback forms as a measure of success.

## Rail Wellbeing Live

### Wellbeing Champions and Mental Health First Aiders unite at Rail Wellbeing Live in Plymouth

#### The context

Rail Wellbeing Live is a free online event that brings together the entire rail industry to share and talk about issues relating to health and wellbeing. This year, the event also included live linkups with four physical locations around the country, hosted by various rail industry stakeholders.

#### The solution

As a sponsor, GWR hosted one of the live wellbeing events in Plymouth, connecting the live audience with online participants. GWR's Wellbeing Champions and Mental Health First Aiders were invited to attend, providing a valuable opportunity to enhance their skills and refocus their dedication as volunteers.

#### The impact

Over 200 GWR colleagues watched Rail Wellbeing Live online. The event served as an excellent platform to showcase our business' work in the field of wellbeing, while also reinvigorating our passionate volunteers. We also facilitated firsthand presentations from 8 stakeholders, including the Samaritans, Railway Mission, British Transport Police, and 3 staff networks, the GWR apprenticeship team, and 3 benefit providers.



Bringing together 80 GWR colleagues enabled them to enhance their role in signposting individuals to appropriate resources and provided an opportunity to spotlight the West Region of our network through hosting the event in Plymouth.

## 9.0 Economic development

### Development and infrastructure enhancements

New infrastructure is vital for connecting people and communities, providing more equitable access to jobs, education, housing, services and people. GWR has a long and proud history of working in partnership with the communities it serves to secure investment and deliver continual improvements in the services and infrastructure that will support local and regional objectives.

The RSSB Rail Social Value Tool will help us to demonstrate the significant impact rail and associated infrastructure improvements can have on the economic development of an area. Providing evidence of wider benefits helps us enhance the business cases for future investment and widen the potential list of funding sources.

In this reporting period, GWR has secured and invested over £12.6m in development and infrastructure enhancements, working closely in partnership with local authorities, developers, Local Enterprise Partnerships and private sector organisations, as well as with the Department for Transport. Partnership work is led by dedicated Growth Managers from GWR and Industry Programme Directors from Network Rail.

### Our schemes

During 2022/23 GWR brought forward schemes at Reading West (new station building and customer facilities), Newbury (station building and interchange), Chippenham (north side access improvements), Castle Cary (car parking and interchange) and Gloucester (forecourt, underpass). Investment streams such as the Local Growth Fund and developer contributions are sourced by partners to support these schemes, precisely because of the wider benefits that flow from increased accessibility and useability of train services.

It should be noted that during the reporting period £12,694,879 was achieved for the metric 'value of developments or infrastructure'. However, this is only the value of financial contributions made, rather than the wider value of the investment. For example the Gloucester scheme comprises an investment of £6m but the business case demonstrates this will enable £7.7m of direct investment in the station area and a further £165m indirect investment in the City.

### Community voices endorse GWR's contribution to local economies

The work that GWR does in this area is recognised and valued by communities. According to the Stakeholder Reputation Audit in 2022, undertaken for GWR by Savanta, 77% of our stakeholders agree that GWR is a significant contributor towards the economic health of their community. The auditors recorded a number of verbatim quotes from stakeholders which illustrate the perceived importance of GWR to local and regional economies:

"The rail link to the far South West is incredibly important and the Night Riviera sleeper service in particular is a vital life line service to Cornwall which is a good service and must be maintained. It is a vital link for people in business travelling between Cornwall and London."

#### MP

"Massive impact both in terms of commuters travelling to Reading/London and the other way to Bristol/Cardiff. Equally in Swindon there is a large inward flow of commuters generating huge economic wealth." **Business**

"GWR is vital to the economy of the West Country. We need holiday makers to keep our economy robust."

#### Passenger and Community

Our partners are keen to continue investing in the rail network to increase rail use and deliver their objectives for the economy, environment and wider society. One example of this is the investment by local partners in new stations. During 2023, three new stations have appeared on the GWR network; Reading Green Park (promoted by Reading Borough Council) which opened in May 2023, Marsh Barton (promoted by Devon County Council), which opened in July 2023 and Portway Park and Ride (promoted by Bristol City Council) which opened in July 2023. These new stations represent significant investment and commitment by their promoters and will deliver wider and lasting benefits to communities.

The Metro West project, promoted by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), provides another example of significant local investment in the railway. Following the start of extra services on the Severn Beach line in December 2021, additional Bristol – Gloucester and Bristol – Bath – Westbury services commenced in May 2023, funded by the Combined Authority. These services, launched by Mayor Dan Norris, represent the next phase of the exciting Metro West plan, also benefitting those in Keynsham, Yate and other West of England communities. Metro West represents a significant investment in local railways, which includes line re-openings to Filton and Henbury and to Portishead, opening new areas to rail access and unlocking development. Plans for new stations are advancing, with works to construct a new station at Ashley on Down on Filton Bank already underway.

As these and other projects come to fruition, we will monitor their impact. Over the next year we will have a greater focus on collating data on the development and growth unlocked by these and other important schemes. There is huge value in this and our stakeholders and partners recognise the contribution that railways make to the economy and wider society.

## Reconnecting communities

### Dartmoor Line launches hourly services and restored station

#### The context

As part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda, in 2021 the Restoring Your Railway fund supported the reopening of the Dartmoor Line between Okehampton and Exeter for year-round services for the first time in nearly 50 years. Initially a two-hourly service, the final stage of the project remained outstanding, to introduce hourly services and restore the station building at Okehampton.

#### The solution

GWR and Network Rail worked collaboratively with project partners to complete the scheme. Following a two-week blockade, hourly Okehampton to Exeter services were introduced in May 2022. Bus services were re-mapped by Devon County Council to provide integrated bus links to Tavistock, Bude and Launceston using the GWR Bus Branch Line concept, and the station building was fully restored with a café, toilets, Dartmoor National Park Visitors Centre, and community shop.



### The impact

Hourly services have proved very successful, with more than 270,000 passengers travelling from Okehampton in the year since the service was launched, including a substantial number of commuters and students. The dedicated bus links are being adopted as a national Restoring Your Railway template and the restored station building is already a huge asset to the community, including creating 5 jobs through the new café.

The Dartmoor Line has won multiple awards at the Rail Innovation Awards, Community Rail Awards and ICE South West Awards, as well as the Outstanding Contribution to Society and Outstanding Teamwork awards at the National Rail Awards.

“I am so proud to be here today to see the amazing work completed on the Dartmoor line and the beginning of a new hourly service between Okehampton and Exeter. After speaking with regular users of the service, it’s clear how central it already is to the community, residents and businesses. By not only restoring this great railway but doubling the number of daily services, it will bring even greater benefits to local people for generations to come.”

Wendy Morton, MP

## 10.0 Climate and environment

### Net zero and decarbonisation

There is significant opportunity for the rail industry to contribute towards reducing the impact of climate change and achieving Net Zero by 2050. GWR is working with Network Rail and the Environment Agency to review the impact of extreme weather events and develop contingency and long-term risk management plans.

Measuring and managing our environmental impact is key to the success of our business. We continue to run trains on electricity wherever possible, and are finalising a decarbonisation roadmap to support the Government’s commitment to net zero and to phase out all diesel-only traction by 2040. Our investment in innovative technology for battery-operated trains is very much in support of this objective.

### Waste, water and energy use

GWR continues to operate in accordance with the international standards for environmental and energy management, maintaining our ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 50001:2018 certifications across the business.

### GWR steps in to bring Vivarail cutting-edge battery tech to the tracks

In February 2023, GWR purchased assets from emissions-free and hybrid trains manufacturer, Vivarail, which entered administration in December 2022.

Securing the future of planned trials of the technology in a real-world environment, GWR is now able to trial high-performance battery and FastCharge technology on our Greenford Line, supporting the wider introduction of battery-powered trains on the UK’s rail network. Nine former Vivarail staff have since joined the GWR team to support the trials and project development.

“This work is a key part of our commitment to reduce the carbon emissions of our train fleet with a view to removing all diesel-only traction from the network by 2040, in line with the Government’s Transport Decarbonisation Plan.”

Simon Green, Engineering Director, GWR

Our environmental and energy management system is allowing us to drive improvements in waste, water, and energy consumption and a successful external audit by Lloyds in early 2023 found our management system to be continuously improving and fully supporting the GWR sustainability agenda.

In the reporting period, GWR achieved its non-hazardous waste recycling target, with an overall recycling figure at 73%, an increase from 64% in FY21/22. We are working closely with both suppliers and vendors to improve our recycling on site and will continue to examine how to best capture recycling efforts across the network.<sup>6</sup>

Through the installation of automated water meters, we continue to closely monitor water consumption across our portfolio. Real-time data is allowing us to see peaks and troughs in consumption, enabling us to rapidly identify and repair any leaks. After a trial of reduced water flow taps, GWR is now installing water-saving taps across our stations to reduce consumption and, based on a similar project by FirstGroup, this could reduce total station water consumption by up to 30%.

## Smart Energy Management

### Data insights to cut carbon and drive down electricity consumption

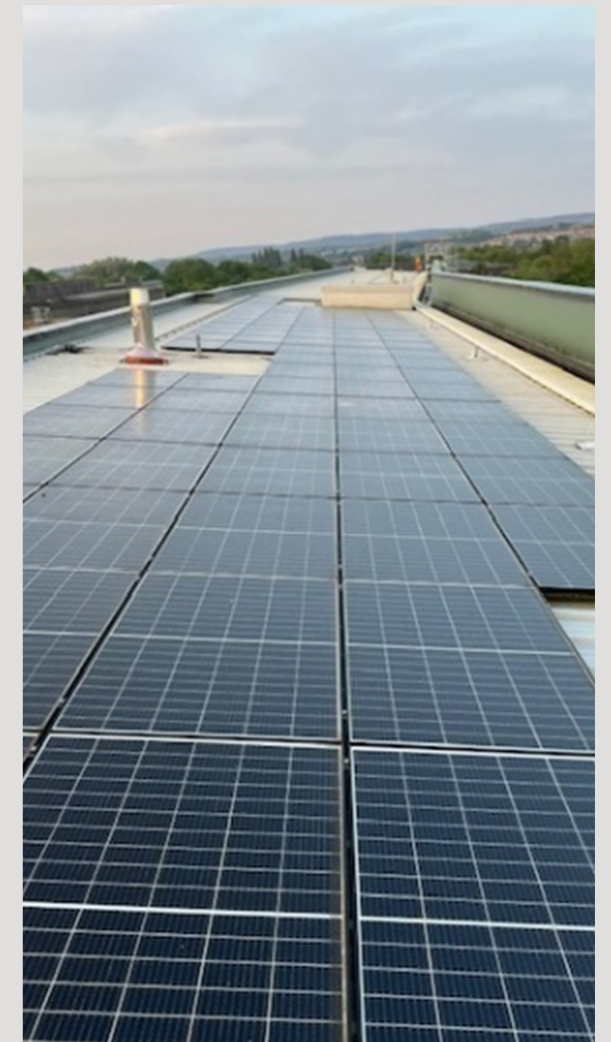
#### The context

GWR has installed a Building Management System (BMS) at all GWR operated stations, allowing remote control and detailed analysis of all energy systems. The BMS has allowed GWR to identify energy wastage and leakage, meaning targeted solutions can be implemented to reduce consumption.

#### The solution

To reduce our energy demand from lighting, energy-efficient LED lighting has been installed at 70% of our stations’ customer-facing areas and 80% in our back of house facilities, with the remaining LED lighting installations underway. Lighting is also now controlled by ambient sensors, ensuring lights are only switched on when needed. Smart metering allows us to accurately measure our energy usage (and our tenants’ usage) in real time and identify hot spots to reduce consumption.

GWR has also enhanced Exeter depot with photovoltaic panels. The expectation is a return in energy and cost savings over time, which will be measured by the depot’s BMS.



<sup>6</sup>Waste data is typically calculated based on recorded weight, where this is unavailable, an estimation is given based on average container threshold

### The impact

The BMS system alerts maintenance colleagues of any lighting failures, allowing our staff to resolve many lighting issues remotely, reducing emissions from maintenance colleagues travelling to sites. Since starting these collective measures in 2014, we have achieved a 63% total reduction in lighting energy use across our stations. Smart metering has already helped us to identify energy wastage and leakage within our energy system and informed our energy reduction interventions. During the forthcoming year we plan to continue to develop heating and lighting controls to minimise energy use across our portfolio.



## 11.0 COVID-19 recovery

As demonstrated throughout this report, GWR is supporting a post-COVID recovery through a wide variety of social value initiatives and interventions.

By prioritising our colleagues and focusing on engagement and satisfaction to retain talent, we are driving growth and organisational stability, as well as offering valuable training and employment opportunities for young people from all backgrounds, who will ultimately help us build a resilient and skilled workforce for the future. In addition, by supporting schools and colleges and investing in education, we are helping young people avoid crime and realise their full potential, contributing to a safer and more responsible society.

GWR acknowledges the challenges individuals are facing in the aftermath of the pandemic and we have provided extra assistance to support our colleague and customer's wellbeing. By prioritising accessibility through physical design features, our Passenger Assist services and inclusive initiatives such as 'Try a Train' and sensory packs for people on the Autistic spectrum, we are striving to help people regain their confidence in using public transportation, combat social isolation and address individual's specific needs in order for them to connect with friends and family, and engage with their communities. The importance of these accessibility initiatives extends beyond physical mobility to encompass individual's wellbeing and mental health.

In working towards a more diverse workforce through inclusive recruitment practices, we are building a resilient organisation with diversity of thought, ultimately improving the effectiveness of our service and recovery efforts. Certain groups, such as ethnic minorities, women, people with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged individuals, have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic's health and socio-economic impacts. By engaging with outreach programmes that support the social inclusion of marginalised groups, such as Princes Trust, Never Mind the Gap and numerous other Community Rail Partnership projects, we are determined to work together to address these inequalities.

The pandemic caused significant economic hardship for individuals and families, particularly those who were already vulnerable or disadvantaged, now compounded by the cost of living crisis. In the reporting period GWR actively contributed to the local community and charities, helping to meet social need, by investing over £1.4m in projects across the network. Through our CCI Fund and our Community Rail Partnerships Major Projects Fund we funded 109 projects which supported customers, charities, community groups and voluntary organisations to deliver benefit in the communities we serve.

GWR serves millions of passengers each year, and understanding their needs and preferences is essential for post-COVID recovery. Providing effortless travel options will contribute to the recovery of local businesses by encouraging more people to use public transportation, supporting economic activity in the regions served by GWR. Through collaborating with government, businesses, and local authorities to deliver new and improved infrastructure, such as increasing the frequency of services on the Dartmoor Line, GWR's focus is fully aligned with the government's Levelling Up agenda, creating new job opportunities and improving quality of life within our communities.

Finally, our sustainability initiatives, in addressing climate change, promoting decarbonisation, waste management, and water conservation, we are contributing to a greener recovery and fostering long-term resilience in the rail industry. Our efforts align with the Sustainable Rail Blueprint, demonstrating our commitment to creating a sustainable transportation system for healthier and more resilient communities.

### 'Go Green By Train' CO2 savings

This year at the Community Rail Awards, Southeast Communities Rail Partnership (SCRCP) won 'Most Effective Communications Campaign' for highlighting the environmental savings of travelling by train. Their campaign was targeted at a youth audience by relating the CO2 savings to the power used to charge mobile phones.

Engagement figures were excellent, reaching well beyond the partnership's followers and core audience. There was a very positive reaction on Twitter and Instagram, and promotion by key partners, supporters, and volunteers helped to promote the message on Facebook and the partnership website. This year the SCRCP used carbon figures again to encourage those visiting London for the Coronation of King Charles III to explore a host of venues on its community rail lines.



# Future projects, aims and measures

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Guided by Akerlof, GWR has undertaken a comprehensive review of the 12 social impact areas, to understand where we can make improvements in our data collection, as well as harness existing data to drive focused improvements. Combined, these initiatives will help us to drive meaningful change and deliver measurable results.

Below, we have included an overview of what we intend to achieve within each social impact area, which is to be read alongside our Social Value Route Map overleaf.

## **Employment, training and skills**

In a marked improvement from the previous reporting period, we were able to collect an additional 20 metrics. These were in relation to apprenticeships, green jobs, learning interventions and mentoring, as well as providing further breakdown on jobs created and lost for Black, Asian and ethnic minorities, those with disabilities and those who fall within areas of relative economic deprivation.

With immediate effect, we will be capturing the number of level 2, 3 and 4+ in-work training qualifications completed for inclusion within future reports.

## **Educational attainment**

Since the previous reporting period, we have been able to capture an additional 3 metrics including students receiving STEM mentoring and careers advice, as well as priority group students receiving curriculum enrichment support.

To complete this picture, next year we will also be capturing priority educators receiving curriculum enrichment talks. We are also looking to resolve limitations in our systems in order to further expand our data reporting for future years.

In terms of enhancing our social value delivery, we are currently working with Network Rail to introduce T Levels in Engineering, a technical qualification for students aged 16 to 19.

## **Supply chain resilience and capacity**

In this reporting period, we captured an additional 3 metrics on supply chain payments. The supply chain impact area represents a significant opportunity for providing additional data. We are therefore targeting a further 6 metrics for reporting period 2025-2025 on inclusive procurement, local supply chain and SMEs, as well as 11 metrics for reporting period 2025-2026 on contracts let with ethical and environmental requirements and suppliers who possess Cyber Essentials certifications.

In the short-term, we will be conducting a comprehensive review of our existing systems to ascertain whether these have the capability, or could be further developed, to capture the metrics requested by the RSVT. This review will be achieved in collaboration with First Rail procurement colleagues and external suppliers.

More widely, we are targeting a reassessment of ISO20400 to progress our sustainable procurement strategy, as well as launching a business-wide partnership with the Supply Chain Sustainability School. The School provides resources and training to help GWR engage with and encourage its suppliers to align with sustainability principles, fostering a more responsible and environmentally-friendly supply chain.

## **Rail accessibility**

In this reporting period, we captured an additional 2 metrics, including the cost of new inclusive design features and stakeholders involved in consultations on design. The vast majority of metrics are now being captured for this impact area.

Once our DfT audit is complete, we intend to investigate the possibility of generating an 'accessibility audit appraisal score'. This will assess:

1. Availability and physical accessibility of transport
2. Cost of transport
3. Services and activities located in inaccessible places
4. Safety and security
5. Travel horizons

We will also review whether an inclusive design course can be budgeted for and delivered for key GWR colleagues, where it will benefit their roles.

## **Workforce equality, diversity and inclusion**

In this reporting period, we captured an additional 22 metrics. These included data on employment and training for people with disabilities and other under-represented groups, information on carers, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in leadership positions in GWR, flexible working arrangements, employees that returned to work after parental leave, alongside data on our ethnicity and disability pay gaps.

An area for improvement for GWR is our diversity reporting, with the vast majority of colleagues choosing not to respond to surveys. Although enhanced diversity reporting could help GWR to identify areas for improvement in terms of representation and inclusion, our priority is to create a culture of trust and transparency, where employees feel safe and empowered to share their experiences and identities.

Within the next reporting period, we will capture the percentage and number of FTE people from under-represented groups, as well as putting a plan in place to address more fully our future projects, aims and measures within the next iteration of our report. This will enable us to identify areas for improvement and further enhance representation and inclusion throughout GWR.

## **Community and charity**

In this reporting period, we were able to capture an additional 23 metrics. These included data on charitable and community volunteering, participation in and access to heritage and art, community initiatives including homelessness, community use of space and facilities, incidence of station or route crime, station adoption initiatives, fundraising and donations.

New metrics we have already begun to capture for the next reporting period are people-hours spent protecting and improving the environment and communications with the community. We also intend to begin capturing Considerate Constructor Scheme (CCS) scores. The scores will serve as a valuable tool in assessing our construction projects, allowing us to pinpoint areas where we can strengthen our community engagement efforts and bolster efforts to protect the environment.

GWR provides significant funding through our Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCI Fund) to external organisations, who then deliver projects that result in positive social value outcomes. In the reporting period, we were able to track a number of these, including the number of people moved from homelessness into secure housing or temporary accommodation. In the coming year, we will work with the organisations we fund, to track these positive outcomes and report them through the RSVT where appropriate.

## **Stakeholder engagement and customers**

In this reporting period, we captured an additional 5 metrics, providing a more detailed breakdown on the types of complaints we had received throughout the year including disruption, noise, vibration, dust and light pollution. We have put in place new targets and actions to reduce these.

To improve the accuracy of our other data collection, we have set up an event tracker to record attendance at public affairs events throughout the year. We will also liaise across departments to draw in more data, which will enable us to provide more precise data on the number of stakeholders attending consultation and engagement events across GWR. We also intend to liaise with Savanta, our independent survey company, to develop a question to capture whether stakeholders feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area. The results will be included in GWR's annual Stakeholder Survey.

### Health, safety and wellbeing

In this reporting period, we captured an additional 8 metrics.

Safety and security metrics are being meticulously measured and monitored within GWR, allowing us to deliver targeted initiatives to improve operational, colleague and passenger safety. In response to the metrics requested within the tool, our data collection has been enhanced since last year to include measuring the number of sessions in which GWR has delivered safety messages, as well as the of people reached with safety messages.

In the coming year, we intend to improve our process for near miss and defect reporting. Our Safety Plan 2023/24 provides in-depth information on our commitments to safety improvement over the coming year, for our colleagues, customers and stakeholders, the most relevant of which have been included within our Social Value Route Map.

In terms of wellbeing, we have expanded our data collection since last year to include the percentage and number of our suppliers who are implementing the 6 standards in the Mental Health at Work commitment and Thriving at Work mental health standards.

For future years, we are ambitious in actively considering the integration of 16 additional metrics. Our first step is to determine their feasibility for collection and, if viable, we will promptly establish the necessary processes to capture these. We are also developing a Power BI workspace to help visualise our data, so that we can begin to create targeted interventions in response to wellbeing challenges across the network.

### Economic development

The economic development impact area represents a significant opportunity for providing additional data. Over the next year we will have a greater focus on collating data on the development and growth unlocked by our schemes.

We are therefore targeting 3 key metrics for inclusion within the 2024-2025 Social Value Report. By the end of this year, we will have developed a plan to identify and begin recording housing sites unlocked by access to train services, including private and affordable homes and retail / commercial space.

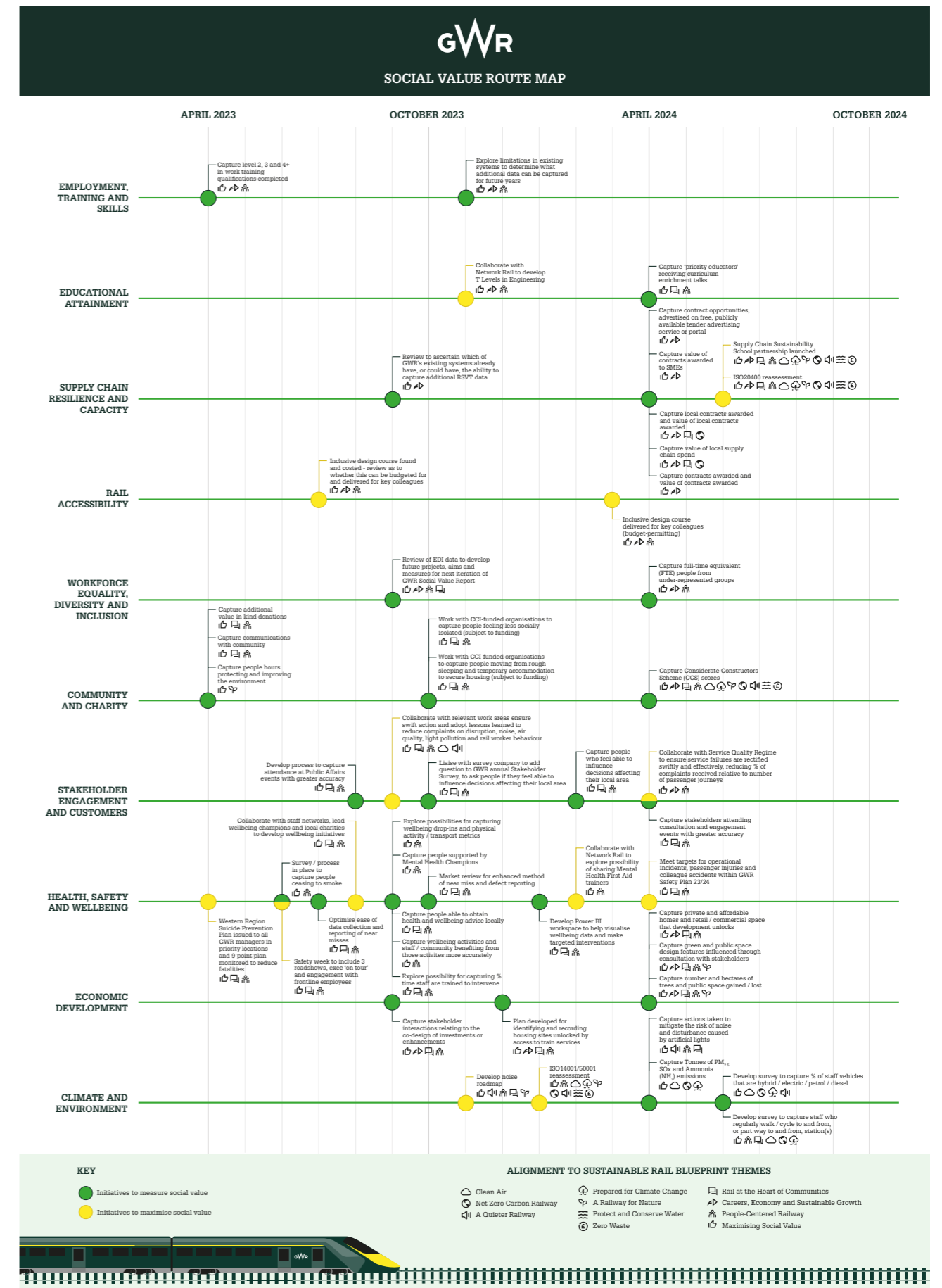
### Climate and environment

The climate and environment impact area represents a significant opportunity for providing additional data. The primary drive from government and the rail sector has been on decarbonisation. As such, much of our resource has been directed towards this area of focus.

For future years, GWR is committed to increasing resource in this area and expanding the number of metrics that we report. For the next reporting period, we are targeting 15 new metrics. This will include data around biodiversity and green spaces, including trees gained or lost, public space gained or lost and design features around green and public space that have been influenced through consultation with stakeholders.

Within the next few months we will also be developing a noise roadmap, which will help us to capture actions taken to mitigate the risk of noise. By this time next year, we also intend to have developed colleague surveys to capture the type of vehicles our colleagues drive and whether they regularly cycle or walk to stations.

# Social Value Route Map



**GWR**