

Business Plan 2023/24



West
Midlands
Railway



London
Northwestern
Railway

Operated by West Midlands Trains





► BUSINESS PLAN

CUSTOMERS,
COMMUNITIES &
ACCESSIBILITY

TRAIN SERVICE

SUSTAINABILITY

SAFETY & SECURITY

THE FUTURE

HOW IT WORKS

Our Business Plan for 2023/24

We are pleased to have agreed our Business Plan for 12 months starting 1st April 2023 with the Department for Transport (DfT).

We are a Train Operating Company (TOC) that is in the middle of its journey of modernisation, investment, and transformation – our leaders and managers are navigating our journey through this exciting process.

Our plan for the coming year builds on the significant investment already made in new train fleets, which customers are increasingly seeing in service. We continue the roll out of our new diesel trains, along with the additional introduction of our new electric trains, as well as the necessary infrastructure and operational changes. This significant change programme represents our key deliverables over the next 12 months, which will continue our transformation towards a more modern railway. Our plan also recognises and supports the emerging vision in the white paper for industry reform, focussing on the nine passenger needs.

The Government has significantly subsidised the rail industry since the beginning of the pandemic, and the continued importance of the industry working together to be cost efficient on behalf of the taxpayer is evident.





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Our Business Plan fits with the industry aims of:



Providing safe, accessible and good quality rail services and stations



Improving the whole industry's cost-efficiency



Driving revenue recovery and growth in customer numbers



Maintaining and improving train service performance



Improving the railway's environmental sustainability



Furthering the engagement, inclusivity and diversity of the West Midlands Trains team



Embedding a "one railway" culture with all partners

Our team is committed to delivering our agreed Business Plan over the next 12 months, thereby putting us on a strong footing for the future as we further improve our train service, enhance our customers' experience of using the railway, and strengthen the ties with the communities we serve.

Ian McConnell
Managing Director



David Lindsay
Finance Director





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Customers, Communities and Accessibility

We will continue to focus on areas aligned to the priorities in the white paper for industry reform, whilst recognising the affordability challenge and the increasing number of passengers returning to the railway.

Our vision remains to be a truly customer-focused organisation that is accessible for all. We aim to achieve this by giving our customers the level of service they deserve; ensuring our actions and decisions are informed by insights gained from proactive engagement with customers, communities and stakeholders; putting our customers at the heart of everything we do; and trying to get things right first time every time.





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Replacing our Help Points on stations, to help our customers feel safe and connected improving the accessibility of our network – this will be the first of a two-year programme



Enabling our Community Station Partnerships to be able to apply for funding from the Station Adoption Fund, on a project-by-project basis



Supporting projects that improve links with young people and education, including skills development, work experience and career opportunities within rail



Adding a 'You Said, We Did' page to our websites to demonstrate to our customers and stakeholders how we've considered their input and used insights to make improvements



Extending the opportunity for customers to use contactless payment for journeys into London, from beyond the current boundary at Watford Junction



Giving community groups the opportunity to bid for funding towards local projects, through our Customer and Community Improvement Fund, known as 'Your Community Your Fund'





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Train Service

We will continue to deliver a safe, high-performing train service, transforming customer experience by introducing brand new trains and continuing to invest in our current trains. Our timetable proposals provide flexibility to support recovery of passenger demand and also serve new markets.

We continue our commitment to significantly improve our passengers' experience of travelling with us by introducing new trains on the majority of our services. We will work collaboratively across industry to deliver efficient, sustainable, affordable timetables which deliver a punctual, reliable train service that meets the needs of passengers.





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Rollout of our new diesel trains on our Worcester to Hereford and Leamington to Nuneaton routes



Rollout of our new electric trains on our West Coast South, Wolverhampton to Walsall, Cross City and Chase Line routes



Plans to upgrade and improve our current electric and diesel trains that remain in the fleet following the rollout of new trains



Re-establishing a suitable rail service, as soon as practicable, to passengers using our Marston Vale service



Collaboration with other industry stakeholders to jointly improve performance, reliability and robustness of our services



Continuation of recruitment and training of new drivers to provide more reliable resourcing



Preparation for the introduction of a Camp Hill service between Birmingham New Street and King's Norton



Preparation for the introduction of a shuttle service between Wolverhampton and Walsall to serve new stations at Darlaston and Willenhall





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Environment and Sustainability

Create cleaner, greener railways to spearhead our ambition to become a leader in sustainable transport with a focus on decarbonisation and air quality.

We aim to deliver sustainable train services to meet passengers' needs, whilst finding cost efficient ways to implement environmental initiatives.

We have established 'enablers' that will be developed to implement environmental and sustainability improvements to support our journey toward net zero.

We will enhance this by collaborating with industry partners, to feed into our Decarbonisation Plan, currently in development, creating pathways to deliver decarbonisation across the business and the wider rail industry.





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Promoting rail travel as sustainable transport and partnering with other forms of public or sustainable transport to promote multi-modal transport benefits



Continued work with RSSB's to install its Air Quality Monitoring equipment at selected stations, with the aim of setting an air quality baseline and develop an Air Quality Management Plan



Reduce energy consumption and improve energy efficiency



Developing a fleet of energy efficiency initiatives to reduce energy and carbon emissions.



Development and initial implementation of a business wide decarbonisation plan



Seeking ways to invest in cost effective solar and electric vehicle charging technology



Creating a recycling, waste reduction and circular economy plan to reuse, repair, refurbish and recycle existing materials and products for as long as possible



Partner with an appropriate expert organisation to develop biodiversity plans at stations and depots





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Passenger Safety and Security

We will continue to focus on safeguarding the security of passengers and staff, as well as the rail network and our information systems. We aim to create a safe and sustainable railway in the most cost-efficient way.

We will work collaboratively with the British Transport Police to address crime and security risks, with a focus on current threats to passengers, staff and wider societal security, including violence towards women and girls, the carriage of weapons and the exploitation of public transport networks by County Lines organised crime gangs.

We will implement Industry-leading proactive security practices that maximise preventative measures and plans meticulously for all eventualities.





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Preventative policing, security and safeguarding measures when the societal impact of the cost of living crisis may drive an increase in disruption and crime



Building upon the strong culture developed during successful national events to nurture leaders and reinforce customer experience



Roll out of body-worn cameras, available to all customer facing staff, to reduce instances of assault and anti-social behaviour



Investigating how we can expand our Safe Places to more locations



Funding for 9 Transport safe officers on the West Midlands Railway network to provide additional 24hr security presence



Further enhancing inclusion and diversity at an industry level to create a culture that is safe and welcoming, representative of the communities that we serve



Enhancing our security conscious culture by training staff in counter terrorism, information security and data protection training, delivered by the British Transport Police





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Looking to the future

Our aim, through collaborative cross industry working, is to be at the forefront of changes within the rail industry, where possible helping to shape the future of the industry, reducing costs and providing better quality, more reliable outcomes for our passengers as soon as possible.

Our outline five year business plan sets out what we expect will be the industry focus points in the coming years. We continue our secondment of staff into the Great British Railways' Transition Team to support, inform and positively influence the industry changes being made.

We keep close to the developments being made across the industry and expect that this close relationship will help us to inform and update our longer-term plans quickly as developments are made at industry level.





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The continuation of our driver recruitment and training plan to reinstate a consistently reliable service, impacted by the lack of training during Covid



An increased focus on ticket evasion through a multi-faceted approach



Plans to work across industry initiatives to develop efficiencies that will help to reduce the cost of operating the railway



Emerging areas where we can integrate in advance of Great British Railways being fully established



Collaboration with infrastructure partners to optimise train and track monitoring techniques to improve reliability and reduce track maintenance times



Support for SwiftGo, which automatically selects the lowest ticket cost for multiple journeys and is working towards the inclusion of rail in the West Midlands



A 5-year outline business plan to align to the strategic direction emerging from Great British Railways





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How the Business Plan works

Contractual Obligations

As part of our National Rail Contract, we are required to develop and submit an Annual Business Plan and an annual Budget in response to the Department for Transport's (DfT) Request for Business Plan received in September each year. Doing this each year gives both parties the opportunity to respond flexibly to changing needs and demands. The business plan is to be mutually agreed, or determined, on or before the 28 February falling prior to the commencement of the Business Plan Year and is implemented from the 1st April each year. WMT is also required to submit a cost-efficiency analysis each year.

Process

WMT worked closely and collaboratively with the DfT in the development of the Business Plan over a period of 5 months. This process covers the forthcoming business plan year in detail, and at a high-level, the subsequent four years as an outline business plan. Throughout the process, significant industry wide cost challenges were achieved, resulting in a substantial reduction in cost base.



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In addition to the development and agreement of the core content of the business plan, this process also includes the agreement of performance based fees, key delivery commitments and key performance indicators, along with minimum standards of service that we will deliver, incentivising us to deliver a high performing railway.





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Business Plan Structure

Our Business Plan is split across nine key areas (components) and these are:

- 1 **Leadership, Management and Resource**
- 2 **People**
- 3 **Collaboration**
- 4 **Train Service Operations**
- 5 **Customers and Communities**
- 6 **Revenue**
- 7 **Environmental Sustainability**
- 8 **Accessibility**
- 9 **New Fleet (Trains)**

Funding

We are funded through two main mechanisms. Firstly we receive a management fee to maintain services to an agreed standard. Additionally we can receive variable performance based fees as a result of good to excellent performance in the following areas:



Customer service



Operational performance



Financial performance



Capital investment programme



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