

FirstGroup sets ambitious science-based emissions reduction targets

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FirstGroup, the leading private sector operator of public transport, has set an ambitious science-based target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. FirstGroup will reduce scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions by 63% by 2035, from a 2020 base year.

In a first for UK bus and rail operators the Group also commits to reduce scope 3 emissions from fuel and energy related activities by 20% by 2028 from a 2020 base year, and that 75% of its suppliers by emissions, covering purchased goods and services and capital goods, will have science-based targets by 2028.

Scope 1 covers direct emissions from road and rail vehicle fuel, heating fuel, and refrigerant gas emissions. Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from the generation of electricity purchased for buildings and to power electric road or rail vehicles. Scope 3 comprises other indirect emissions inclusive of business travel, water use and waste treatment and disposal.

FirstGroup's targets have been validated and approved by global body the Science Based Targets initiative. Science-based targets provide a clearly defined path for companies to reduce greenhouse gas

emissions, helping to prevent the worst impacts of climate change and ensuring sustainable business growth.

Targets are considered 'science-based' if they are in line with what the latest climate science says is necessary to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement and limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. As the transport sector is the biggest contributor to UK greenhouse gas emissions, a shift to zero emission public transport and active travel – moving people out of cars and planes – will be vital to achieving the UK government's goal of net-zero by 2050.

Among the actions that FirstGroup is taking are:

- Transitioning from diesel to electric or hydrogen buses, in order to achieve its goal of operating a 100% zero emission bus fleet by 2035
- Introducing bi-mode and electric trains to support the transition to net-zero and the UK government's goal to remove all diesel-only trains by 2040.
- Training First Rail employees in energy efficient train driving
- Installing more than 6,000 solar panels at 20 bus depots, which will generate more than two million kWh of renewable energy a year, equivalent to the amount of energy required to power 700 family homes.

The underlying cash FirstGroup generated in the 2022/23 financial year was deployed in investing more than £90m in capital expenditure, primarily to drive the decarbonisation of the First Bus fleet and infrastructure. In the current financial year, FirstGroup anticipates deploying a further investment of around £130m in First Bus, mainly focused on the electrification of buses and depots.

FirstGroup's Chief Executive Officer, Graham Sutherland, said: "FirstGroup is playing its part in accelerating the transition to a zero-carbon world and we are pleased to have taken a further step forward today with the validation of our targets by the Science Based Targets initiative. A greater use of public transport will be critical to the UK achieving its net-zero goals and we offer easy, convenient, and sustainable transport options that encourage people to leave their car at home and switch to buses and trains."

FirstGroup's strategic framework for sustainability, [Mobility Beyond Today](#), sets out the company's ambition to be the partner of choice for innovative and sustainable transport for a zero-carbon future. The Group's leadership in this area has already been recognised through inclusion in the Clean200 list for the last four years, meaning that FirstGroup is one of the cleanest 200 companies worldwide; and as the only UK transport operator in S&P's Sustainability Yearbook.

Photo credit: FirstGroup