

How the right welfare equipment could help you keep project costs under control

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As inflation rises and construction costs soar, keeping rail project costs in check has never been tougher. Speaking to RBD, Richard Green, Group Finance Director at Welfare Hire Nationwide, explains how the right on site equipment could help.

Ensuring that major rail projects remain within budget is notoriously difficult. When the Elizabeth Line opened in 2022, it was reported that Crossrail had **overspent by £4 billion**, while **HS2's estimated total cost** has more than doubled since its inception. And, with inflationary pressures intensifying, every penny counts for today's project managers.

These managers know that the true price of on-site equipment includes running costs. Not only does this make forecasting tough – it also means that hiring lower-cost (and potentially less efficient) equipment is often a false economy.

In this article, we'll look at how the right welfare equipment could help you to keep project costs in check, reducing energy outlays and staff absence rates.

Forecasting for success



Rail projects go over budget, not because leaders fail to anticipate additional costs, but because these costs are difficult to accurately forecast. And, when it comes to on-site equipment, operating costs can rise quickly and unexpectedly.

Luckily, the running costs of modern welfare equipment are now easier to predict, helping project managers to budget accurately.

It's something Welfare Hire has invested heavily in. We've gathered data from real infrastructure projects which have used our equipment, so that we can be confident in the estimates we make to clients. This data also powers our 'Eco Calculator' – a unique online tool that instantly demonstrates to project managers the running cost savings they could make by hiring a given piece of equipment.

Thanks to this wealth of data, they can also accurately predict the total cost of equipment, ensuring that it fits their budget.

Powered sustainably

But all equipment isn't created equal. While leaders might be tempted to opt for the cheapest welfare units and lighting towers, investing in higher-end, sustainably powered systems will pay dividends. Simply put, reduced fuel usage means significantly lower operating costs – a good thing for your project's budget.

And the numbers speak for themselves. A standard, generator-run 10-man mobile welfare unit requires around eight hours of generator time during a normal on-site shift. Running on a combination of solar and

lithium battery power, one of our equivalent eco welfare units would rely on a generator for an average of only one hour a day.

This doesn't just reduce energy costs (which have soared in recent years) – it also means that fewer fuel deliveries are required, unlocking additional savings.

The savings themselves can be staggering. Welfare Hire's eco equipment saves on fuel use and costs, as well as CO₂ emissions, helping to keep project costs under control while boosting its eco credentials.

Lower servicing costs



And it's not just about how on-site equipment is powered. Traditional welfare units need regular services (whether to top up water or empty foul tanks), and the costs can mount quickly. Again, it pays to look at the bigger picture, investing in higher-end units that require less upkeep.

Welfare Hire's state-of-the-art welfare units are fitted with larger fresh and wastewater tanks, meaning that they need to be serviced less frequently (every two and a half weeks, on average). Their ceramic, water-flush toilets are also more hygienic, staying cleaner for longer.

And, thanks to smart tech, we can even determine exactly when they need to be serviced – and schedule these visits only when required. This helps project managers to avoid overspending on unnecessary

services.

Employee wellbeing reduces costs



Welfare equipment can also impact budgets in less tangible ways – particularly if leaders fail to provide the right on site facilities for their workforce.

According to a report by performance and wellbeing experts, GoodShape, [sickness-related absences cost the bus and rail sectors an estimated £7.7 million between 2019 and 2022](#). These figures included an 18 per cent increase in costs accrued due to mental-health-related absences.

Unsurprisingly, the right welfare equipment – comfortable, well-equipped units, in which employees can relax and connect – boosts wellbeing on site. And a happier, healthier workforce means lower absence rates – which, in turn, reduces costly project delays.

Indeed, when sourcing on site welfare equipment, it's important to take a holistic, big-picture approach. With budgets tighter than ever, high-quality eco units might seem like an unnecessary investment – but they'll deliver long-term savings, helping you to keep project costs under control and projects on track.