

RSSB: Going further and faster on environmental and social sustainability are key to unlocking future potential

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By RSSB

At a time when climate change is high on everyone's agenda, with world leaders having met at COP26, we would hope no-one would argue with this statement. However, there will always be different views about how sustainability improvements should be delivered. RSSB is prepared for this, with in-house expertise on sustainability topics, ready to serve members and help them with their own sustainability challenges

RSSB is leading the development of the first industry-wide approach to sustainability, by collaborating with the rail industry and Government. Directly supporting the delivery of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail. The Sustainable Rail Strategy, co-created by industry sustainability experts, led by RSSB, will set out options and choices to inform development of Great British Railways' Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP).

The strategy will provide clear goals for the rail industry, converting what Government has set out in policy and what society expects a major industry like ours to be doing in this space.

However, a strategy and goals are useless without driving action on the ground. It's crucial that we identify what needs to be done, what we prioritise and how much funding is needed. Driving further improvements in areas such as decarbonisation, air quality, biodiversity and social sustainability, both efficiently and safely.

The industry is already working towards this by introducing new technology, increasing resilience to climate change and considering the wider social benefits of connecting national and local communities, but more work is needed to ensure we are able to maintain our position ahead of other modes.

As well as investment in the right assets, we need colleagues running the railway to be better informed so they can do the right thing. That's way our work going forward to support our members will be less about the 'what' and more about the 'how'. How should procurement teams make better decisions when it comes to goods and services to deliver a more sustainable railway? Similarly, colleagues in finance teams will need to understand how they can build investment business cases that account not just for the financial, but the environmental and social capitals using the Accounting for Sustainability approach.



Photo of a smiling young couple travelling together by train

2050 may seem a long way away. But when you consider the work that needs to be done, it's not.

That's why RSSB is taking rail sustainability so seriously. Focusing our expertise and resources to support the rail industry, as it moves at pace to better understand the barriers to improving environmental and

social sustainability, and to develop safe, efficient and innovative solutions.

I know our members are just as committed.

This autumn, RSSB launched a detailed air quality monitoring programme at railway sites across the network and will be shortly releasing a tool developed to help our members measure the social value of their operations.

Our work on the Sustainable Rail Strategy continues, and if you would like to know more about RSSB's work in this area, or are interested in the services we provide to members, please get in touch at:

<https://customer-portal.rssb.co.uk> or visit <https://www.rssb.co.uk/sustainability>

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