



Business Plan

October 2025

South Western
 Railway

Executive summary



At South Western Railway (SWR) we are focused on delivering the best service we can for our customers and stakeholders while supporting and developing our colleagues through a period of significant change in the rail industry.

Prior to our transfer to public ownership, we agreed a Business Plan with the Department for Transport which covers the 25/26 financial year. A summary of this Business Plan can be found below. Following the transfer of SWR into public ownership, we continue to broadly follow the Business Plan agreed under our previous ownership group with appropriate changes where necessary due to our move into public ownership e.g. removal of owning group and performance-based fee charges. We are currently working on an ambitious integrated Business Plan for the 2026/2027 Financial Year and beyond.

In our Leadership Plan we have set out our plans to continue on the path of open data for the rail industry and the next stage in our development of **inputs to the Rail Data Marketplace**. We see the benefits of open and linked data sources every day as we seek to simplify and modernize access to real-time data.

As a large train operator with significant operations within urban areas we are constantly working to improve the safety and security of our customers and staff. Our approach to **security and safeguarding** has continued to develop as our knowledge and experience of how to help the most vulnerable members of society continues to evolve and we aim to continue that process in 25/26 following re-accreditation of our Safeguarding on Rail status.

We recognise the challenges the British Transport Police face as we see them ourselves in the increasing risk of staff assaults and violence on our stations and trains and in 25/26 we will **work with BTP on how we best deploy their services on our network** so that they are available to our staff when they need them.

In the People Plan we set out how our people are critical to the success of South Western Railway and as a business we are fully focused on doing the right thing for our colleagues. We will continue to **develop our leadership capability throughout 2025** to prepare for significant changes in the industry, growing their resilience so they can better support our colleagues through these changes.

We have heeded the DfT guidance on **driver recruitment and training** and have proposed an approach to our establishment that is in line with modern practices. We will continue our efforts for efficiency in rosters while supporting driver release for Arterio training, the biggest change programme on the network in decades, and planning for the future and ETCS arriving in the next Control Period.

Our collaboration with Network Rail has been developing in recent years and is given added impetus in 25/26 with a series of **joint ambitions** which have been structured to achieve progress in delivering associated tangible benefits, primarily to maintain and improve the operational resilience, effectiveness, safety and performance of our railway, for the ultimate benefit of our customers and the communities we jointly serve.

In 25/26 SWR will look to build upon and further strengthen, the collaborative working relationships we have with our **neighbouring TOCs and the wider UK-Rail TOC community**, including where appropriate, other travel mode operators.

For Train Service Operations our focus is very much on **delivering the new Arterio train fleet into service** and we are working hard to get trains in as quickly as possible. Alongside that our Fleet Engineering Team remain dedicated to continuing to operate our legacy fleets which have been such stalwarts of the operation on the South Western network but which are now showing their age.

We are always striving to deliver a reliable service, **and operational performance remains a primary focus** for SWR despite the challenge from the delayed Arterio fleet and the legacy rolling stock. We have proposed a series of initiatives to help improve performance and are always looking for technology and innovative solutions that will deliver tangible results.

SWR remains a crucial **partner for local communities** across the network, and we intend to continue acting as such. We will continue to engage with local and regional authorities, passenger forums and other stakeholders to provide insight and ensure we maximise the benefit we bring to communities through our operation. We will also continue to work alongside and, subject to funding being available, support Community Ambassadors and Community Rail Partnerships as well as **operating the Customer and Communities Improvement Fund scheme and investing in an array of exciting and often innovative projects** right across the network.





We are excited to have been part of the **Customer Experience Standards** trial with GBRTT and Transport Focus at the beginning of this year and look forward to working with our industry partners on developing the self-assessment tool and understanding how it will drive standardisation in the industry.

We will also progress with the next stages of our **Customer Experience Strategy** with its 7 key focus areas which seek to move the dial on customer experience by using a metrics driven approach and utilising feedback and insight from our **Voice of the Customer** programme.

Our Revenue Plan for 25/26 continues to **drive net subsidy reduction** by moving fast to deliver commercial plans that focusing on delivering improved taxpayer value. We will deliver marketing campaigns that support both SWR and industry aims including for the Great British Rail Sale.

We continue to work closely with RDG and the wider industry to enhance retail systems and develop new functionality (such as TVM upgrades). We are also focussed on **developing our digital channels** and converting customers to smart media as demonstrated by the continuing growth of passenger journeys made on smart media.

SWR has a strong track record on sustainability having been the first TOC to launch a **Net Zero Carbon Strategy** and has had science-based targets in place for a number of years. In 25/26 we will continue to work towards delivering these aims. Alongside this we will continue our work on **cleaner air** following on from the successful trial of the Pluvo filtration column at Salisbury and we will increasing our focus on **waste management** as the Simpler Recycling regulations come into force from 31 March 2025.

The Accessibility Plan focuses on supporting customers with a variety of access needs and we continue to make improvements year on year while ensuring we stay close to those who need us most and work with our **Accessibility and Inclusion Forum** to ensure we keep listening and adapting our plans to deliver for all our customers.

We will continue to operate an **Accessibility Minor Works Fund in 2025/26** to be spent on undertaking small scale physical alterations or additions at stations to improve the accessibility of those stations to disabled persons and those with additional needs. Our Minor Works proposals will be consulted through our Accessibility and Inclusion Forum for their comments and approval ahead of implementation.



Contact us



Contact Centre: 0345 600 0650
The Customer Service Centre is available seven days a week for comments and suggestions.

It is open from:

08:00 to 20:00 Monday to Friday,

09:00 to 18:00 Saturday,

and 09:00 to 16:00 Sunday



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Post to us 24 hours a day for a rapid response to your questions



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Got a question?

Simply click the '**Live Chat**' button on our website or on the South Western Railway app



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