

# Our approach to the historic environment

**We understand how history shapes the places we live in and the lives we lead.**

One of our Environmental Sustainability Strategy objectives is to build a railway that:

‘responds to its surroundings, protects views and celebrates our heritage - through sensitive integration into the existing landscape, valuing our historic environment.’

**This reflects a wider commitment to protecting archaeology, respecting valued views and capturing information that helps build a fuller picture of our history.**

Our aim is to avoid or reduce impacts on the historic environment, including through preserving archaeological remains in their original location. Where this is not practically possible, we are developing an approach to ensure the affected elements of the historical environments are appropriately recorded. We have been working collaboratively with local communities, design teams and external stakeholders such as Historic England to do this. We are carrying out detailed desk-based studies, such as reviewing archival and historic environment records, topographical data, historic maps, LiDAR data and aerial photographs. We are also carrying out our own surveys to identify historic buildings,

archaeological features and landscapes to understand their importance and to identify any historic relationships.

We have been carrying out a series of non-intrusive surveys using geophysics, including magnetometer and ground penetrating radar surveys, to identify potential archaeological remains below the ground surface. We are also carrying out a programme of archaeological trial trenching to better understand remains identified by non-intrusive techniques.

We have carried out a Historic Landscape Characterisation exercise, site walkovers and setting-assessment visits to identify and assess historic landscape features and historic buildings. We will be adding to this work with archive visits later this year. These surveys, along with our desk-based studies, have identified historic features such as individual structures, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, ancient woodland and historic hedgerows, and surviving areas of ridge and furrow, helping us to understand their importance.

We have brought this work together to build a clearer picture of the historic environment in which the railway would be constructed. This has helped us understand how our proposals could affect the historical environment and assisted us in designing ways to reduce or remove these impacts where reasonably practicable.

## Mitigating impacts

As we have developed our proposals, we have first identified opportunities to protect and enhance the historic environment. We have identified locations where we can better reveal the importance of a historic building or landscape by retaining key features, reinstating lost elements, or removing features that detract from the ability to appreciate historic importance. This work has also contributed to biodiversity improvements through the reinstatement of previously lost landscapes and features, helping nature to return and strengthening local character.

Where our proposals will impact historic buildings or landscapes, we will work with local authorities and Historic England to develop plans to record historic buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, and historic landscape areas before works take place to ensure valuable information is retained.

We have sought to preserve known archaeological sites in their original location by carefully designing elements of the project to avoid these sites. Where this is not possible, we will work with local authorities and Historic England to develop plans for excavation, recording, archiving and publication of research findings related to these sites. This work will contribute to a wider understanding of our historical environment.

## Engagement and working with communities

As well as engaging with local authorities and national bodies such as Historic England, we have established an advisory board that includes industry experts on the historic environment. This board is helping to shape our research agenda as we develop and implement our approach to mitigating impacts.

We also recognise that local communities, including local history groups and societies, have a wealth of knowledge and information that is invaluable to our research and assessment. We are drawing on this expertise to identify ways of meeting our strategic objectives for the historic environment. This will help ensure that the way we are developing our proposals achieves the best possible outcomes.

It is important to us that we share the knowledge we are gaining throughout the development of our proposals. We will look for ways to engage with communities so you have an opportunity to find out about the exciting things we are discovering on your doorstep. This may include local events like open days, 'meet the archaeologist' workshops and even volunteering opportunities where people can get their hands dirty.

### Get in touch

If you have any questions, please get in touch using the details below:



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