

# Our approach to historic environment

**Protecting the environment is a fundamental part of our decision-making and you can read more about our approach to the environment at:**

**[www.eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024](http://www.eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024)**

This factsheet provides more detail on how we'll protect and mitigate impacts on the historic environment from the proposals.

## **Our approach to historic environment**

We understand history's importance in shaping our places and lives. The changes over time and how we have managed and built our environments tell us about who we are today.

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”**

## **Understanding the historic environment**

We are carrying out detailed desk-based studies, such as reviewing archival information, topographical data, historic maps, LiDAR data and aerial photographs to identify archaeological features, historic buildings, spaces, places and features to understand







their importance and historic relationships. This will allow us to identify and evaluate what needs to be protected along the route of the proposed railway.

To understand potential archaeology, we have started a series of non-intrusive surveys using geophysics, a form of ground penetrating radar, to identify potential archaeological remains below the ground surface. We will also be undertaking ground surveys of our built and landscape heritage. These non-intrusive surveys help us identify historic features we are currently unaware of and help us to get additional information about sites that we already know exist.

Areas of archaeological interest identified through our early non-intrusive survey work and desk-based studies will inform a programme of evaluation trenching. Evaluation trenching will let us test whether the archaeological information we have found in our non-intrusive surveys is correct and make sure we have not missed anything important.

The surveys of our built and landscape heritage, together with studies of archives, historic maps and documents, will allow us to identify important built and landscape heritage. The built and landscape heritage includes important historic buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, and historic spaces and places. This survey and archive work will enable us to understand their importance and historic relationships such as important views to and from them.

We will collate this work to get a clearer picture of the historic environment that the railway would be constructed within. This will help us understand the impacts of the proposals on our history and help us plan and design ways to reduce or remove these impacts so far as reasonably practicable.

## **Mitigating impacts**

As we develop the proposals, we will look for opportunities to protect and enhance the historic environment. This can be through avoiding known archaeological remains, protecting important views by careful positioning of railway buildings or other structures, and enhancing the setting of historic buildings through public realm and landscape design.

We will identify opportunities to reinstate and reflect historic landscape features and reveal the heritage importance of a heritage asset or group of assets, retaining and strengthening local character. Applying this deep understanding of the historic landscape gained through our survey work and archive studies could also contribute to biodiversity improvements through reinstatement of previously lost landscapes and features which could help nature return.

In advance of the main construction works, we will look for opportunities to better understand our history through a programme of archaeological and built and historic landscape recording. For archaeology, this will involve working with local authorities and Historic England to develop plans for



excavation and recording of archaeological sites. For historic buildings and other built heritage assets, we will work with local authorities and Historic England to develop plans to record details of historic buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, and historic landscape areas before works take place to ensure valuable information is retained.

This would contribute to a wider understanding of our environment and the historic communities who lived and thrived in these locations for thousands of years.

## **Engagement and working with communities**

As well as speaking to local authorities and national bodies such as Historic England, we recognise that local communities, including local history groups and societies, have a wealth of knowledge and information which will be invaluable to our research and evaluation. We will draw on this expertise

to discuss ways of meeting our strategic objectives for the historic environment. This will mean that the way we are developing our proposals would get the best 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 volunteer opportunities where people can get their hands dirty.