

# CORE VALUES

**Taylor Woodrow's JULIAN GATWARD explains to PAUL STEPHEN how embracing the concepts of sustainability has enhanced the company**

**W**hen it comes to sustainability, few companies give it as high a priority as Taylor Woodrow, says the company's Managing Director Julian Gatward.

He describes it as "a thread that runs through everything we do", and those wanting hard evidence need look no further than RAIL's National Rail Awards, where the business won the top accolade for Sustainability, last September, for its integral role in the construction of Old Oak Common (OOC) depot.

As one of the future stables for the Elizabeth Line's new fleet of Class 345 Aventras, Taylor Woodrow ably demonstrated its environmental credentials by devising an impressive energy efficient and carbon saving design solution for the £142 million depot, which will open in 2018.

Consisting of sidings to accommodate 33 of the 66 Bombardier-built Aventura trains, plus a nine-road operating, maintenance and control building, renewable energy generation from methods including ground source heat pumps and solar panels will meet more than 50% of the site's energy requirements.

These green technologies will also yield an estimated £10 million in reduced operating costs over the lifetime of the project, representing a hefty return on investment of 1,500%.

Within the company, sustainability is also at the heart of Taylor Woodrow's workforce, as Gatward explains: "Our most valuable currencies are our people, their knowledge and the way we work."

"In order for our people to thrive in our environment, we deliver a sustainable business approach led by our company

values and underpinned by how we interact with and lead our teams."

Achieving this sustainable business approach and value-based way of working involves a co-ordinated and carefully conceived four-way strategy comprising four distinct objectives.

These are: not taking on more work than the company can resource, employing more people at a young age, providing challenging training and monitoring, and also developing the company's talent pipeline.

The last three of these points are all accomplished by employing a variety of innovative tools beginning with Taylor Woodrow's graduate rotation programme, that offers practical experience in a number of business sectors including engineering, quantity surveying, design and Business Information Modelling (BIM).

This has proved extremely successful in helping address the sector skills gap by attracting university leavers to the construction sector as Taylor Woodrow reports a year-on-year rise in the number of graduates, apprentices and trainees recruited to the company from higher education since 2014.

As part of VINCI Construction UK, the team is supported by an Academy that is committed to excellence and lifelong learning, having pioneered four major development programmes to cultivate its talent.

These include: Empower, which teaches people how to adapt and thrive within a team environment; Orchestra, that gives them the tools to use in the planning and execution of projects; Project Management+, which gives current and future project management teams the skills to successfully



manage their teams and projects; and Best Practice in Collaboration, which provides the tools to develop empathy and uses role play to practise these skills.

Gatward adds: "We also encourage our teams to get involved in a range of external initiatives, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award. This is another exciting development opportunity that inspires young people to develop through hands-on experience."

Taylor Woodrow considers staff engagement and retention as the most reliable indicators of the current sustainability levels enjoyed by its workforce. It strongly believes these must be kept high in order to increase profitability and productivity, while reducing absences and workplace accidents.

It can therefore be satisfied that its sustainability strategy is working well, as consecutive staff surveys confirm an increase in the company's engagement score from 78% to 85% since 2014. It's an exemplary score - and 7% higher than the construction sector average.

Meanwhile, the churn rate of employees fell by 50% during 2016, pointing to a reduced turnover and higher overall staff satisfaction.

These improved scores also follow on from a concerted effort to implement a

## What CAREER LIVE



Increasing numbers of graduates, apprentices and trainees have been attracted to join the construction sector by Taylor Woodrow's graduate rotation programme. TAYLOR WOODROW.

performance, which is why it is important to Taylor Woodrow."

Taylor Woodrow also recognises that increasing sustainability means tackling the systemic gender imbalance that exists within the construction industry; sector-wide, only 11% of the workforce are women.

Leading by example, 22% of the company's board members are female, while the Women in Taylor Woodrow working group has been formed to develop an inclusive environment in which employees can flourish, assisted by an active mentoring programme and holding educative workshops with both men and women.

Finally, over the past year, the company has changed its structure to create a larger internal engineering department, to enhance delivery of tenders and projects and create a truly engineering-led approach. The changes aim to strengthen the management of the business and to generate closer collaboration between engineering teams, consultants and the supply chain.

"We have brought together our design, engineering, BIM and planning functions to provide leadership, expertise and support to our projects from the bid stage right through

to construction on site," says Gatward.

"We are engineers, not traders, and it is our projects where we create the chance to deliver our engineering-led approach to our work on site. Like many of the contractors in infrastructure, we deliver our work via a robust supply chain rather than direct delivery of the project.

"The value that we bring to the projects is therefore in the way that we co-ordinate the operations on our projects and get involved with our contractors. We generate value for us and our client by our knowledge of how to lead the work of our supply chain partners and the integration of specialist design with our lead consulting engineers.

"Our engineering-led approach is to integrate selection of methods with permanent and temporary works design, so that the solutions adopted are buildable and economic.

"We aim to deliver value to our clients by working alongside our designers to deliver economic, timeous and buildable solutions. The integration of this approach with our supply chain delivers sustainable solutions for our clients and challenging opportunities for our people." ■

**“ Diversity helps build a stronger team and a successful business through improved recruitment, retention and business performance.”**

**Julian Gatward, Managing Director, Taylor Woodrow**

