



# Sustainability Plan

Updated: 1 December 2025

VMS Ltd provides vegetation management, grounds maintenance, clearance, landscaping, and minor civils across the rail, utilities, water, and commercial sectors. We are dedicated to operating sustainably—safeguarding the environment, enhancing biodiversity, supporting local communities, and delivering social value—while consistently providing safe, high-quality services to our clients.

## Our Commitment under ISO 14001:2015

VMS maintains an ISO 14001:2015-accredited Environmental Management System (EMS) and is committed to:

- Protecting the environment by preventing pollution and promoting biodiversity.
- Complying with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements relevant to our operations.
- Driving continual improvement in EMS performance, objectives, and outcomes.
- Applying a life cycle perspective to our activities, from procurement and delivery through to waste management and end-of-life impacts.
- Identifying risks and opportunities to strengthen environmental performance and resilience.
- Setting, reviewing, and communicating measurable environmental objectives.
- Engaging openly and responsibly with stakeholders, including employees, clients, suppliers, and communities.

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One of the most significant environmental impacts of our operations for the Environment Agency is the removal of trees and the cutting of grass, which can reduce valuable wildlife habitats.

To mitigate these impacts, VMS adapts its approach to works in ways that reduce harm and enhance biodiversity—often at no additional cost.

- **Grass cutting:** The standard practice is to cut all grass to the required environmental specification (width, height, distance), regardless of vegetation type. Instead, we identify areas of high ecological value, such as wildflower meadows, and adjust cutting schedules to reduce frequency or delay until after pollination.
- **Tree works:** Traditionally, trees are cut to ground level and material is chipped or removed from site. Where appropriate, we now create habitat piles in safe locations to support wildlife, and hedgerows may be “laid” rather than removed.
- **Site scoping:** Each site is individually assessed, with a requirement to determine whether a nature-positive approach can be applied.

#### Year 1 (2024–25) Results:

- 64 nature-positive recommendations implemented across 437 work sites (15%).
- This baseline will inform future reporting and improvement.

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VMS is committed to achieving **Net Zero by 2050**. Our strategy includes:

- Phasing in environmentally sensitive vehicle alternatives where practicable.
- Using fleet tracking software and local resource planning to reduce mileage by 5% per annum.
- Increasing the proportion of battery-powered small tools where technology allows.
- Running all non-electric small tools on biofuel.
- Continually seeking innovative solutions to accelerate progress.

**Year 1 (2024–25) Results:**

- Carbon reduction plan produced to 2030.
- Fleet vehicles fitted with new tracking hardware; baseline data recorded: 773,519 miles (average 18,200 miles per vehicle).
- 5 of 8 welfare vehicles replaced with solar-powered alternatives, reducing idle engine use.
- 53 of 267 small tools now electric (20%).
- All small tools powered by Aspen biofuel.

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VMS is committed to protecting and supporting our workforce and communities by:

- Ensuring all employees are paid a real living wage and safeguarded against modern slavery.
- Addressing industry skill shortages by introducing new local entrants to the sector, while promoting equal opportunities.
- Offering accredited training and career pathways through our Landra-approved provider, VMT.
- Supporting local community activities, clubs, charities, and worthwhile causes.

**Year 1 (2024–25) Results:**

- 4 of 8 new starters were new to the industry.
- £22,000 invested in staff training.
- £5,600 donated to local community projects, including Thrapston YFA, Stanwick Lakes, Methodist Church Soup Kitchen, and Harborough Town FC U16s.

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VMS is committed to responsible procurement and resource efficiency by:

- Purchasing equipment and materials with strong social and environmental credentials.
- Extending the lifecycle of small tools by stripping end-of-life units and reusing components.
- Offering clients recycled plastic fencing options alongside traditional timber, with trials showing significant carbon savings (1.09 kg CO<sub>2</sub> eq/kg vs. 3.17 kg CO<sub>2</sub> eq/kg for standard polymer).
- Exploring opportunities for PPE recycling in future years.

**Year 1 (2024–25) Results:**

- 12 small tools decommissioned; 38 components recycled and reused, saving an estimated £20,000.
- No fencing projects undertaken where recycled plastic could be offered.
- PPE recycling initiatives under review for Year 2 (2025–26).

**Communication & Review**

This Sustainability Plan is communicated to employees, contractors, and suppliers; made publicly available; and reviewed annually as part of our ISO 14001 management review process to ensure ongoing suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness.

**Signed:**

Rob Mallett – Managing Director

Vegetation Management Services Limited

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