Press Release

27 November 2023

Avanti West Coast opens new round of funding to support community projects

- *Avanti West Coast aims to create a difference in regions it serves with funding pot*
- *Customer and Communities Improvement Fund available to deliver local initiatives*
- *Charities, organisations, and community groups encouraged to submit ideas*

Avanti West Coast has launched a new round of funding for projects designed to improve stations and create a difference in communities local to its route.

The Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) is open for applications for initiatives that address regeneration challenges and social needs across the regions served by Avanti West Coast.

It is the fourth round of funding the intercity operator has made available to support charitable and community activities on its network, as part of CCIF. This latest investment will see money awarded to the successful bidders over a one-year period.

Charities, stakeholders, organisations, and community groups located within 10 miles of a station managed or served by the intercity operator on the West Coast Main Line, which runs between London, Scotland, and North Wales, are encouraged to submit proposals for projects that can bring positive change to local communities.

Submissions could range from schemes aimed at improving the experience at stations through giant art installations, to better integrated journeys using sustainable transport modes, or connecting young people to education or job opportunities.

Applications should consider the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals – a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. This helped shape Avanti West Coast's thinking behind the CCIF, to create inclusive, prosperous, and connected communities.

One beneficiary of the CCIF was Sherborne Community Hub Project - a children's gardening group and adult peer support group based on a residential estate close to Crewe town centre. They secured funding in April 2021 to continue running the hub for two years so residents of all ages could carry on benefitting from regular peer support and activity days. The funds also enabled them to transform the hub to make the outside area accessible and the inside space better equipped to accommodate a range of activities.

Andy Mellors, Managing Director of Avanti West Coast, said: "We're delighted to be opening another round of our Customer and Communities Improvement Fund to build on the positive changes we've helped deliver in previous years.

"At Avanti West Coast we connect people and places to opportunity and this fund will help do just that – by supporting initiatives that matter most to those communities across our route.

"We would love for local organisations, community groups, stakeholders, and charities to bid for a share of the funding, so we can support projects that will benefit them, as well as create a difference in the regions we serve."

For more information about CCIF and guidance on how to apply for a share of the fund, visit: https://www.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/about-us/sustainability/community-hub

The closing date for applications is 23:59 on 12 January 2024.

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The UN Sustainable Development Goals can be found here: Take Action for the Sustainable Development Goals - United Nations Sustainable Development

Customer and Communities Improvement Fund

The Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) is in place to support schemes across the Avanti West Coast route. Its aim is to support projects across the routes and regions we serve and create a difference that benefits the community.

We welcome applications from registered charities, community groups and other not-for-profit organisations, business partnerships, local authorities, town councils and parish councils who are located within 10 miles of one of our stations or a station that we serve across the West Coast Main Line.

For more information and guidance on how to apply, visit: Our communities | Avanti West Coast

About Avanti West Coast

Avanti West Coast, operator of intercity rail services on the West Coast Main Line, is a joint venture between FirstGroup and Trenitalia, delivering a cleaner, greener railway that drives the West Coast forward.

We're on a mission to revolutionise train travel. Our refurbed Pendolinos are returning to the rails, with a £117m investment that's delivering best in class comfort. Rebuilt using sustainable materials wherever possible, including tables made from recycled plastic bottles, our upgraded fleet offers 25,000 brand new seats, free Wi-Fi, onboard recycling and much more.

New Hitachi trains are set to replace our Voyager trains from 2024, leading to a 61% cut in carbon emissions. Quieter and roomier, with more reliable Wi-Fi, wireless charging for electrical devices and a real-time customer information system, the new 23-strong fleet is the result of a £350m investment in sustainable travel.

We're tackling climate change wherever we can, from reducing energy and water use to training drivers in eco-driving techniques and sourcing food and drink from local suppliers. Our goal is to be net zero carbon by 2031. We're on track.

For the latest news, visit the Avanti West Coast Media Centre:
https://newsdesk.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/

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