

'NO NET LOSS' FOR BIODIVERSITY, NETWORK RAIL, BALFOUR BEATTY & PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF



BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT OVERVIEW

The Crossrail Kent project encompasses the design and construction for works on the two-mile stretch from Plumstead to Abbey Wood in south east London. This includes the remodelling of the existing Abbey Wood station where Crossrail services will terminate. Construction activities and the widening of the railway corridor have resulted in the loss of a number of mature trees that lined the old railway boundary fence.

Network Rail has an obligation under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to conserve biodiversity. This duty includes the restoring and enhancing of species populations and habitats, as well as protecting them.

The Network Rail Crossrail Programme at Plumstead to Abbey Wood is going beyond this duty and has committed to a target of "No Net Loss" for biodiversity. The Network Rail Crossrail project is one of the first schemes of its kind in to calculate the net score of biodiversity on an infrastructure project. This target will be robustly calculated and reported using the DEFRA offsetting accounting methodology where habitat is rated and a score calculated to determine if the project has reached its goal. The Biodiversity calculations for this project are scored and managed using the Balfour Beatty Site Restoration Scheme document.

A voluntary tree planting event was held on 7th March 2014 to assist with reaching the "no net loss" target Network Rail, The Royal Borough of Greenwich, Balfour Beatty and Parsons Brinckerhoff staff were actively involved in the event. It is hoped the tree planting day along with future community initiatives will push the project into a positive net score for biodiversity.

Fact box

Company name:
Network Rail, Balfour Beatty,
Parsons Brinckerhoff

Project name:
'No net loss' for Biodiversity

Location:
Crossrail Kent (Plumstead to
Abbey Wood)

Biodiversity enhancement:

- Tree planting
- Toolbox talk on the "no net loss" target

Size:
26 trees

Cost:
Approx. £15,000 for trees and the
organisation of the event

Tips:
"No net loss" for biodiversity is a target that can and should be applied across all infrastructure projects in the UK. By using the DEFRA counting methodology construction projects can calculate exactly the effect they have on the local biodiversity. The system is unique in the fact that scores are lost if the habitat is not within close proximity to the original location and of similar distinctiveness and size.

Year completed:
2014

Categories:

- Large scale permanent
- Community engagement
- Most innovative

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT OVERVIEW (cont.)

As the trees could not be planted within the new railway corridor, Network Rail and Balfour Beatty approached the Royal Borough of Greenwich to see if they would allow the planting of trees in one of their nearby green open areas close to local properties. A site was identified because it was within close proximity of the railway, thus ensuring the project wouldn't be penalised heavily using the DEFRA system for planting trees far outside of its original location. It was agreed that maintenance of the trees would be undertaken by the contractor for the first year, after which it would be handed over to the Local Authority.

Over 30 people attended the event and were given a toolbox talk on the "no net loss" target and why it was important to replant trees that had been lost to construction works, a total of 26 semi mature trees were planted during the voluntary planting event. During the day, local residents came to talk to staff and welcomed the fact that both Network Rail and Balfour Beatty were actively involved in meeting the "no net loss" target. A local resident commented that it was refreshing to see a construction project replacing trees that were recently cut down to accommodate the track widening works by providing screening from the worksite and improving the local biodiversity.

The tree planting event with staff and local residents not only contributed to the main target of "no net loss" for biodiversity but also allowed the project to improve relations with the local community. The voluntary tree planting event has been an important step in ensuring that biodiversity is re-instated and considered not only for the last phase of construction but for the whole duration of the project.

The tree planting event was communicated throughout the whole of Network Rail and how the project was one of the first of its kind to calculate biodiversity using the DEFRA counting methodology. Councillors from Greenwich thanked the project for the initiative and a story was run about the day in the local press.

SUMMARY

The event was the first tree planting initiative to be held on Crossrail Kent and not only provides new habitat for nesting birds and other species but also reduces carbon emissions, increases the amenity value for local residents and will also result in a wider positive impact for future generations.

This project has shown how a major infrastructure project such as Crossrail can provide sustainable and easily achievable ways to improve environmental performance and to make biodiversity a key part of the decision making process.

Pictures of the enhancements



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