

**Biodiversity at Green Park**  
**GREEN PARK BUSINESS PARK, READING, RG2 6GP**  
Mapletree Investments Pte Ltd

## **BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: Legacy**

### **Project overview**

Mapletree's business park, Green Park is set in 195-acres of parkland and is one of the largest office communities of its type in Europe. The park supports a range of animals/plants and present are amenity grasslands, Longwater Lake, trees, woodland, shrub beds including wildflower grassland, log piles and brash/vegetation piles.

### **What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?**

Originally the site was low-lying, poor quality agricultural land. The first biodiversity action plan, produced in 2009, is continually reviewed, updated and expanded. A phase 1 habitat report was produced in 2011 which helped identify the known or potential key ecological receptors within the park. The original owners identified a clear sustainability objective to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and provide a distinct, diverse attractive place without compromising the value and integrity of the environment.

### **What were the reasons behind this project?**

Longwater Lake, which runs through the park, sets the character and managing seasonal flooding as well as reedbeds enables the site to be biodiverse. The biodiversity on site, created in the design, has now been included in CSR initiatives, KPI's and awards. CSR includes community engagement, working groups and newsletters articles. KPIs are incorporated into the organisational KPIs and are targeted towards indicator species – Bats, birds, botanical species, hedgehogs and invasive species. In addition, the Biodiversity Benchmark accreditation has been awarded to Green Park, successively, over the last six years.



*Green Park Business Park is set in 195-acres of parkland.*



*A group of occupiers and members of the Green Park Team participating in a CSR Activity: River Kennet clean up and litter pick.*

## What were the biodiversity measures taken?

SMART objectives in the biodiversity management plan (BMP) include wildflower meadows, bird/bat boxes, native planting – all transferable to another project. BMP was compiled in 2014 with an initial 2013 baseline. A plan is in place until 2025 - regularly reviewed twice yearly with stakeholders. Green Park's BMP mirrors the goals of the Reading BMP. Green Park is bio-diversely innovative because few business parks have established business/residential communities alongside the biodiversity. It has repeatedly achieved a biodiversity benchmark accreditation – one of only 53 UK sites. Ten new habitats created, ranging from reedbed, forested areas, wildflower meadows to hedgehog brush piles, riparian grass and relaxed mowing areas. Habitats are linked by hedgerows and long grass supporting commuting and foraging species. In 2020, 50% of 20 bird boxes were used plus 31 bat boxes, 14 insect hotels and 2 artificial grass snake breeding sites. 2020 Hedgehog survey identified hedgehogs in two locations with similar results found in early 2021. In 2018, 11 dragonfly species were observed. A 2013 survey found 11 noteworthy invertebrate species; therefore, Green Park can be considered of regional importance. The development commenced before net gain metrics were widely used, however originally the site was low-lying poor quality agricultural land but now contains diverse habitats. The landscape team has regular biodiversity-based toolbox talks plus yearly training and management reviews with stakeholders occurring every 6 months. Green Park is open to everyone via the many signposted public footpaths – often used by cyclists, runners and dogwalkers. Local bird, bat and mammal groups undertook surveys on-site. Staff-led volunteering initiatives like litter picks are open to the wider community. Onsite, tree works chippings are used as mulch, plus grass cuttings for artificial grass snake breeding pens. All green waste is kept for planting projects. Green Park has an environmental working group which regularly volunteers.



*One of the grass snake nurseries found on-site with an information board.*



*Mammal tunnel used for monitoring the hedgehog population at Green Park.*

### Further information

The legacy is an innovative and biodiverse space which demonstrates that business and people can live/work in harmony with biodiversity. Of the key species that are monitored, there has been a noted increase in nesting birds and hedgehogs. Botanical species and bats remain stable and invasive species have been proactively managed to reduce. The key to the success of the park's biodiversity initiatives has been the strong partnership between the key stakeholders who share the biodiversity vision. Biodiversity enhancements are installed using guidance from the biodiversity management plan, produced by qualified ecologists and these enhancements are continuous, being divided into a five-year plan for installation. The baseline data was produced in 2013 with ongoing yearly monitoring of key species.

### Project Team

- Client / funders – Mapletree Investments Pte Ltd
- Other design team members – Knight Frank (Managing Agents), Landscaping Team (Ground Control), Stantec (Consulting Ecologists)
- Volunteer organisations – Berks & South Bucks Bat Group, Berkshire Ornithological group

### What was the motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

The landscaping remit was to create/manage an attractive working environment through visually appealing amenity and recreation opportunities. Although the original design included an emphasis on biodiversity - especially birds – the current BMP has expanded to include a variety of species. This has significantly increased the biodiversity levels, which have exceeded the original remit. The motivation for this includes; protecting, maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity interest/character of the habitats and protected/notable species; to strengthen relationships with local wildlife groups; and actively manage the park for the enjoyment of its users and promote news of Green Parks biodiversity achievements.



*Biodiversity area – includes stag beetle hotels, raptor boxes, recycled wood chippings and more.*



*Cygnets on Longwater Lake.*