

Biodiversity net gain. Good practice principles for development

Case studies

Tom Butterworth *WSP*

Julia Baker *Balfour Beatty*

Rachel Hoskin *Footprint Ecology*



Griffin Court, 15 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9PN

Tel: 020 7549 3300

Fax: 020 7549 3349

Email: enquiries@ciria.org

Website: www.ciria.org

10 Biodiversity net positive pilot influences planning

Details

Organisations Carillion, Network Rail

Contact Rachael.Riley@carillionplc.com / Hamish.Critchell-Ward@carillionplc.com

10.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

Carillion's East Midlands rail team continues to lead on the Network Rail BNP pilot, resulting in a planning decision that has saved Network Rail £150 000 to £500 000 in costs.

Carillion's East Midlands rail team introduced the Network Rail BNP pilot to the Midland Mainline Programme and are continuing to lead its implementation. The commitment to the pilot has directly influenced a local authority's determination of the Network Rail EIA screening opinion request for a line speed improvement project at Market Harborough, avoiding potential costs of £150 000 to £500 000.



Figure 10.1 Line speed improvement project new alignment at Market Harborough

The aims were:

- to promote biodiversity through the Midland Mainline Programme sustainability strategy
- no net loss of biodiversity on Network Rail's infrastructure projects
- Key performance indicator (KPI) framework 6.2.2 initiatives and innovation
- KPI framework 6.3.1 number of changes to standards or projects approvals.

10.2 ISSUES

The line speed improvement project at Market Harborough, currently at development stage GRIP3, will involve vegetation clearance and permanent habitat loss. In particular, the project will affect the locally important fauna species, Grass Vetchling, and three potential local wildlife sites that are important due to the presence of fern communities on three overbridges within the footprint of the project. The habitat is also likely to support GNCs, bats, and badgers. The footprint of the project extends beyond the Network Rail boundary and will require planning permission for change of use, which could trigger the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

10.3 OUTCOMES

Carillion's rail team supported the preparation of the request for an EIA screening opinion, which included a commitment to the adoption of BNP. The team has already started stakeholder engagement regarding the pilot with Natural England, the local authority consultee, and as a result Natural England and the local authority fully understood the concept and determined that EIA was not required.

This was on the understanding that habitat loss would be calculated and mitigated through the adoption of the BNP pilot.

The screening opinion is not enforceable through planning conditions, however it would be invalidated if the pilot was not carried out.

The Network Rail project team had anticipated costs of up to £500 000 to undertake an EIA. This equates to one per cent of the total project budget, which is the industry average.

Carillion's introduction of the pilot to the Midland Mainline has demonstrated innovation and industry benchmarking to achieve cost savings and beneficial stakeholder relationships.