

# **Biodiversity net gain. Good practice principles for development**

## ***Case studies***

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# 8 Implementing a new EPS licence

## Details

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## 8.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

Carillion has led the first implementation of a new EPS licence resulting in delivering programme requirements, achieving biodiversity benefits and demonstrating financial savings

The London to Corby programme has a significant effect on local wildlife and ecology. EPS mitigation licences must be obtained from Natural England before work can take place, if that work could kill or disturb certain species, damage or destroy their breeding or resting places or obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places. New guidance from Natural England (2014) presented an opportunity to rethink the strategy for managing the ecological impacts of the project.

The main targets and objectives were to:

- deliver a net positive outcome for biodiversity
- celebrate success and industry good practice.

## 8.2 ISSUES

Rail projects, with wide areas of impact, can be subject to expensive and time-consuming mitigation requirements. The current licensing approach can focus on individual species at locations where there is a little chance of them thriving in the long term. This can result in projects surveying and moving small numbers of animals with little

or no benefit for that animal's conservation status and requiring considerable resource. Between Bedford and Kettering there are numerous newt ponds. The scope of the works justified obtaining an EPS licence.



Figure 8.1 Buffer areas around newt ponds

## 8.3 OUTCOMES

- No requirement for fencing and trapping of newts.
- Provision of habitat compensation.
- Compensation will be achieved locally.
- The compensation habitat area is secured through a legal agreement over a 30 year period.
- The mitigation does not need to be in place before starting site works if it has been agreed through the legal arrangements and conditioned through the licence.
- London to Corby is the first infrastructure and large-scale project to adopt this process.

## 8.4 KEY BENEFITS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

The new licence approach has reduced the need for Carillion to relocate or exclude EPS from the development site, provided that new habitat is created that will improve the local population of GCN.

Carillion Rail in the East Midlands, in collaboration with Network Rail, Atkins Global and Natural England have taken the initiative to lead a strategy to use the new guidance issued by Natural England, securing senior management and legal commitment from Network Rail in the process.

This will:

- achieve a minimum of £500 000 savings as a result of less resources, fencing, trapping, additional surveys etc
- provide programme certainty and flexibility
- have significant positive implications for the wider business – repeating this process for other infrastructure projects will have huge benefits across the industry
- contribute to biodiversity net positive mitigation
- support a guidance document with lessons learned.