

Biodiversity net gain. Good practice principles for development

Case studies

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9 Biodiversity net positive pilot: Midland Mainline Programme

Details

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9.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

The Midland Mainline Programme's sustainability strategy objective is to achieve biodiversity net positive. Carillion leads the Midland Mainline Programme pilot to deliver Network Rail infrastructure projects (IP) pioneering commitment for a measurable net positive contribution to biodiversity in the UK by 2019.

The Midland Mainline Programme is undertaking significant vegetation clearance to enable the delivery of its improvements, electrification, building and civils projects, resulting in permanent habitat loss. Until recently, no methodology existed to assess this environmental impact and the issues around offsetting have remained controversial, attracting criticism from stakeholders that developers act as though they have a licence to trash. Although there is no legal requirement Carillion recognises the need to address the environmental impact of its works, and supports this pioneering and innovative approach to develop robust tools for the industry.

9.2 ISSUES

Following on from best practice on the Thameslink Programme, Carillion have led on engagement with the Network Rail IP biodiversity net positive (BNP) programme and volunteered the programme as a pilot. The purpose of the pilot is to trial the use of a toolkit that has been developed to assess the biodiversity impact of the works, undertake stakeholder engagement and design mitigation to achieve a net positive contribution to biodiversity.

The toolkit has been developed by the Network Rail IP BNP programme with careful and transparent engagement with stakeholders and 'critical friends' including Defra and Natural England. Other pilot projects include the Greater West electrification programme and East-West Rail.



Figure 9.1 Vegetation clearance for Carillion's Midland Mainline programme projects



Figure 9.2 Stakeholder engagement workshop

9.3 OUTCOMES

Carillion represents the Midland Mainline Programme on the BNP working group. It has published briefings and arranged training sessions, and in February 2016 ran the first engagement workshop with key stakeholders including Natural England, the RSPB, the Environment Agency, The Wildlife Trusts, and representatives from the farming community.

Carillion will use the toolkit to calculate habitat loss and biodiversity units for its current projects. Current estimates for the Kettering to Corby and Bedford to Kettering projects indicate a 30 to 40 per cent reduction in biodiversity because of the works. Carillion is leading on discussions with Network Rail regarding funding arrangements for mitigation.

9.4 KEY BENEFITS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

- Supporting the development of a pioneering and innovative approach.
- Transparent stakeholder engagement.
- Collaborative working with Network Rail and framework contractors.