

A1 Leeming to Barton Improvement Scheme (A1L2B) – High Goskins Biodiversity Enhancements

North Yorkshire JV – Carillion & Morgan Sindall

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Large scale permanent

Project overview

The A1L2B project is a £350 million highways scheme, upgrading the A1 from dual carriageway to motorway across a 19km section through North Yorkshire.

The project is predominantly within a rural setting; however it passes through urban areas at Catterick and Brompton On Swale.

The project commenced in 2014 and is due for completion 2017, with over 600 people employed on the scheme.

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

The site is existing broadleaved woodland adjacent to the current A1 dual carriageway known as High Goskins.

The woodland is generally unmanaged, in good condition and home to several species of flora and fauna.

Were there any specific conditions that led to you carrying out this work?

Elements of this work were mitigation measures



Photo: White-letter hairstreak butterfly

included as part of European Protected Species licenses; however the key aspect of this submission relates to sound environmental management and decision making based upon enhancing biodiversity.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

To compensate for habitat loss close to the woodland, nine bat boxes were erected on trees within the woodland as they were identified as suitable and in close proximity.

After recent inspections, it was confirmed that 3 of these boxes are occupied and regularly used by bats, which is very encouraging.

As well as bats, the woodland is also home to a family of badgers with an active sett present and also forms terrestrial habitat for a small population of great crested newts (GCN).

Whilst no works are to be carried out near the badger sett, badger activity has been monitored through the use of wildlife camera traps and badger fencing is to be installed to prevent death on the nearby motorway.

Timber from site clearance and stone from former dry stone walls have also been reused to create hibernacula within the existing woodland to enhance terrestrial habitat for GCN.

However, going beyond these mitigation measures, the project has made a minor design change which will hopefully have a large impact regarding biodiversity enhancement.

During a routine inspection, a White-letter Hairstreak butterfly was discovered on the woodland floor. This was reported to the Butterfly Conservation Trust (BCT) and turned out to be one of only four records of this species in Yorkshire during 2014.

This species breeds on elm trees, so as a result of this discovery, the landscape design for this section of the scheme has been amended to increase elm numbers in an attempt to enhance the population of the butterfly.

Long-term monitoring visits are to be undertaken and records submitted to the BCT to monitor the success of doing one small thing to aid this elusive species of butterfly.

How would you best describe the project?
An enhancement.



Photo: Badgers on wildlife camera

Further information

The existing woodland and new woodland plantation will be monitored during construction until 2017 project completion, then for the following 5 years during the aftercare period.

During this time, records will be submitted to aid biodiversity data and this case study has reiterated that one small change can have a big impact on local biodiversity.

The project also has an aim to not just maintain, but enhance biodiversity so the monitoring of GCN, bat and badger populations also ensures we meet our overall objectives, as well as relevant licence conditions.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Discovering how rare this butterfly was within the locality, provided the motivation to revisit the designed landscape plans and make a positive change to improve the habitat opportunities for the local population of this species of butterfly.