

ALLERTON WASTE RECOVERY PARK KNARESBOROUGH, NORTH YORKSHIRE

VINCI Construction UK

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Temporary Award

Project overview

Allerton Waste Recovery Park (AWRP) comprises the design and construction of a combined Energy from Waste (EfW) and Mechanical and Biological Treatment (MBT) facility to treat household waste in North Yorkshire. The plant will process over 230,000 tonnes of household waste annually.

The MBT hall houses equipment that will extract recyclable waste from refuse bags, whilst the anaerobic digester will process food waste. The EfW plant will create energy from the remaining waste items.

The project is being undertaken on behalf of AmeyCespa and North Yorkshire County Council. Work on site commenced in March 2015 and commissioning will take place in June 2017. At the peak of the project, over 500 staff are working on site.

was previously used as a quarry. A concrete works and landfill site are situated adjacent to the AWRP site.

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

Prior to site works commencing a Geoenvironmental Report was commissioned, with no protected species identified as being present on site, however a number bird species are known to reside locally. The site is bounded by woodland, with a number of lagoons and water bodies nearby.

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

VINCI is committed to protecting the environment, and as a project team we wanted to challenge ourselves to enhance our work area with a number of temporary biodiversity features.

The project is registered under the Considerate Contractors Scheme, so these enhancements formed part of our commitment to making a positive contribution to the natural environment.

During Summer 2015, a number of sand martins were noted to be nesting in an embankment that was due to be backfilled. As nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, we had to avoid damage to nesting sites.



"Bugging 'Em Pallets"

Bug hotels are one example of how we encouraged growth in biodiversity

The site is located adjacent to the A168 and

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

To protect the nesting sand martins, after engaging with a local ecologist, the programmed backfilling works were postponed until after any chicks had left the nest. Once the nests were empty, several artificial sanded embankments were created away of the main work area and the backfilling works were able to continue. The site is regularly monitored for the presence of sand martins and other nesting birds, and currently they have made new homes in the new sanded embankments and at the edge of a nearby lagoon.

To enhance site for the workforce, and to encourage growth in site biodiversity, a number of other initiatives were undertaken by the project team:

- Planting a 'coffee pot garden' in the site compound, reusing large empty coffee pots with each pot sponsored by a member of the workforce, to attract pollinating insects. The plant types are changed seasonally to ensure that there is always something growing in the garden
- Creation of insect hotels along the site 'green corridor', connecting the wooded area at the north of the site with the lagoon to the south of the site. The insect hotels were constructed by the site team from materials salvaged from the site works, including wooden pallets, clay pipes, insulation and bricks. The hotels provide shelter for a large number of invertebrate insects

Both of these biodiversity initiatives have proved to be popular talking points on site, and have been shared with the rest of the company to replicate on other projects.



New homes for the sand martins - vertical sanded faces cut into an existing embankment, providing an ideal home for a nesting sand martin

To complete these initiatives, our team members volunteered their own **time**. In line with VINCI's commitment to environmental protection, we were also able to make use of the company 'Stand Out, Make A Difference' days, which allow employees to take a day away from their job to undertake a voluntary task.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement

Further information

The new sand martin habitat was created as part of the on-going site works, with the previous nesting areas monitored twice every day by the General Foreman for signs of the birds returning.

For the construction of the bug hotels, suitable materials were collected by the General Foreman and then transported to the construction locations. Once in place, we constructed the bug hotels and maintained them weekly to ensure they provided an optimum environment for visiting bugs. As part of the planning process, we named the hotels with mini-beast themed titles:

Bugging 'Em Pallets

Ain't Mis-Bee-Hiving

Bee-O-Diverse-City

Fly's Pray

Following the instigation of the three biodiversity enhancement, we feel that we have improved the site environment and will leave a lasting legacy. The sand martins and other birds are nesting safely in the new habitat and at the nearby lagoon; the 'coffee pot garden' continues to flourish and provides a welcome burst of colour to the welfare area; and the bug hotels have become home to a large number of mini-beasts.

To further promote biodiversity, a number of environmentally themed Tool Box Talks have been presented to the workforce to broaden their knowledge and highlight the difference that everyone can make. If the scheme was to be repeated on another project, we would be keen to implement the enhancements sooner to allow for even greater contribution from the workforce.



Some of the summer flowers in the 'coffee pot garden'

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

We initially undertook the project to improve the welfare environment. Following the success of the 'coffee pot garden', we challenged ourselves to create larger enhancements, resulting in the bug hotels and nesting sites.

The initiatives show that big budgets are not required to make a positive environmental impact; just creativity and commitment.