

Crossrail - C360 Shafts and Headhouses

Mile End, London

JV – Costain – Skanska (CSJV)

BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Community engagement

Project overview

The Costain-Skanska joint venture, C360 Shafts and Headhouses, project at Mile End, to the tune of £60,000,000 is a part of the wider Crossrail (CRL) initiative making effective cross-London rail transport a reality.

C360 contributes to this aim in the Mile End area through constructing essential works (emergency access and ventilation) to the main CRL running tunnels at Mile End Park, Eleanor Street and Rounton Road.

Mile End is one of the most densely populated areas in the UK and is home to a diverse mix of ethnic groups.

Ensuring works are carried out sustainably, both to protect the environment and such historically marginalised ethnic groups, is a key objective for the project.

As such, a number of innovative methods and endeavours have helped to simultaneously improve biodiversity and community relations in the area, with the broader aim of



Photo: Donation of tools from CSJV

upholding CSJV's sustainability aims.

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

N/A

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

C360 has a unique built and social environment. This posed an important additional challenge to ensure any measures were genuinely effective.

Built environment - the complex construction and space-restricted nature of the works for C360 left little

scope to mitigate biodiversity impacts on site.

Social environment - the local area, which has a high proportion of ethnic minorities making up the demographic, has significant levels of socio-economic deprivation.

These 2 conditions created an intensified need to protect biodiversity and support the surrounding communities in this already vulnerable area.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

To both enhance biodiversity and support the local community, the project team contacted the local Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park (THCP), one of the largest urban woodlands in London, to see if they could make use of surplus materials that would otherwise be disposed.

C360 donated one *Pyrus calleryana* (China Pear) worth £700.00 to the park (relocated from site), and seven one ton bags of top soil worth £100.00 each to the Link Age Plus Older People's Garden (also managed by the park team), and five one tonne bags of woodchips (£150.00), which were surplus to the THCP, so they directed CSJV to local social housing landlord East End Homes.

The China Pear complements the local Tower Hamlets biodiversity action plan which specifies the need to plant more fruit tree species in the area. Thus the China Pear creates ecologically valuable habitat in the context of invertebrates in Tower Hamlets.

This donation also comes on the back of discussions with park management at regular volunteering days,



Photo: Donation of Pear tree

whereby C360 staff get grubby to support the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity at the park.

In addition to the donation of surplus materials CSJV also bought £600.00 worth of new hand tools and water butts.

The investment by CSJV empowers the local community to, in the 1st instance, enjoy biodiversity and in the 2nd instance get involved.

Many local residents, surrounding schools, and the local gypsy-traveller community, use the park for education, leisure and volunteering.

By enhancing biodiversity off site (as opposed to problematically on site), this endeavour has contributed to the long term, post-construction, provision of green space access to these socio-economically deprived groups, in direct cooperation with the aims of

the THCP management team. This cooperation has contributed in part to an improved quality of life for these local residents.

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

Further information

Installed by the local community, thereby actively empowering and involving them in biodiversity protection.

The donation of tools and materials enables the tower hamlets cemetery park provide a location for local schools to obtain an outdoor education for their students, and the local borough to meet one of its biodiversity plan objectives of increasing education of biodiversity and local priority species such as butterflies and bumble bees.

This installation can be considered even more sustainable given the use of hand tools and man power only.

The Cemetery Park does not use power tools, and with over 3000 volunteers and students a year the new hand tools were well received.



Photo: Staff supporting maintenance at the park

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

To get from one site to another a short cut is through the cemetery park. It's a valuable oasis amongst the tower blocks.

The outdoor education they do with the schools is extremely important, especially with a large number of young people growing up with no access to nature.