

**Area 2 Asset Support Contract (Highways England)
Motorways and trunk roads in the southwest (M5, M4, A40, A46, A36 A303)**

Skanska UK PLC

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Small Scale Permanent Award

Project overview

The project covers all maintenance and improvement works on the Highways England road network in Area 2, covering a large part of the southwest of England. There are approximately 350 staff on the contract, working from 13 depots and offices. The projected spend is £250m over the 5 year contract, with approximately £200m completed so far. The project is mostly rural, with some sections of suburban and urban road e.g. M32 Bristol.

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

The biodiversity value of the depots can be considered low as they mostly consist of buildings and hardstanding areas. There are areas of amenity grassland and trees around the perimeters of the depots.

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

There were are not any project specific requirements, however, as part of **Skanska’s Living Our Values Week the Area 2 Team** embarked upon a challenge to design and build spaces for nature within our projects and depots.

This submission focuses on biodiversity enhancements at 3 of the depots in the north of the project which are used for delivering maintenance works.



Biodiversity enhancements at Almondsbury Depot



What were the biodiversity measures taken?

At Eastington depot the team created a new garden on an area of hardstanding using pallets and cable reels to build furniture. Old sandbags, PPE and a cistern have been re-used as planters and grow bags. The planting has been a mixture of flowers and vegetables enhancing biodiversity, creating a communal area for the depot and producing food. Additionally a bird feeding table has been built with reclaimed wood, rain water is harvested to water the garden and a team BBQ and other events in the new garden has raised in excess of £600 for local charities.

Almondsbury depot saw the renovation of the office garden into a wildlife haven. Here office and depot staff used waste materials to create a nest boxes, a living wall, pond and hibernacula/bug hotel. PPE and pipe off cuts were re-used as planters and plastic bottles became bird feeders. The team invested their own lunch breaks over the course of a week into making the garden a success. These improvements will provide a lasting enhancement to the depots biodiversity. The garden is now being used by staff as a lunch area and plays host to birds and insects using the feeders and flowering plants.

Tormarton depot used waste wood to construct a bird feeder and pheasant shelter, additionally a number of nest boxes have been installed to enhance the local biodiversity. A disused area of scrub within the depot has been enhanced and is now a diverse wildflower meadow of approximately 100m² providing habitat and food sources for a wide range of insects, pollinators, reptiles and mammals.



Eastington habitat and communal area creation

How would you best describe the project?

The works consisted of small scale, permanent biodiversity enhancements.

Further information

Each of the biodiversity enhancements has been installed separately during 2016. All of the features have been installed or created by site, office and depot staff using the minimum of tools, materials and equipment which have been recycled wherever possible. The longer term benefits of the features is an improvement in biodiversity, food availability and breeding habitats available within the depots for a variety of species.

Another important benefit is connecting the staff working in the depots to nature, their local environment and sustainability. By making the staff feel **more engaged with the 'soft estate' areas of their depots and offices they have** taken ownership of the biodiversity improvements. The creation of these sites has been great for raising awareness and making people think more about how they can affect biodiversity, even at a small, local scale.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

To enhance our depots through providing diverse habitats which can in turn support a greater range of species whilst motivating and involving people to take part in activities that connect them with the environment, hopefully encouraging them to lead more sustainable lives outside of work.



Tormarton biodiversity enhancements and Almondsbury wildlife garden