



Biodiversity Enhancement
Peterborough/Cambridgeshire/United Kingdom
Arcadis Consulting (UK) Ltd / Trebor Developments

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: *Habitat Creation - (Large scale 5ha and above)*

Project overview

Arcadis was appointed by Trebor Developments to provide ecological advice regarding proposed redevelopment of the former Mars Petcare site (Peterborough). This project demonstrates how a cost effective, locationally appropriate, offsetting scheme can be developed delivering local jobs and regeneration, (now factory for Crown Packaging). The aspect of the project we believe is award worthy is the biodiversity habitat creation, which enhances 57 km of road verge for pollinators, being delivered by Peterborough City Council (PCC).

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

The site was a petfood factory, demolished between 2013 – 2014, in the intervening years a quality brownfield habitat developed amongst concrete slabs and scattered trees.

What were the reasons behind this project ?

Brownfield habitat is highly valued in the biodiversity metric. Following maximising brownfield biodiversity on site, Arcadis worked with the LPA, PCC, to create an offsetting scheme to deliver local biodiversity goals and deliver BNG. The scheme was selected via discussions with the PCC Wildlife Officer and PCC Natural & Historic Environment Manager. The proposal is to modify the management of the Protected Road Verges (PRV) across John Clare Country, in and around Peterborough. The intervention is funded by the development and will support improved management for a 30-year period.



Pictures showing the site prior to the development - being used as a storage facility for lorry trailers.



Mitigation/minimisation – displacement of reptiles through habitat manipulation.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Brownfield habitat retained (0.51 ha) or created (0.76 ha) includes banks using site materials and ephemeral pools of water. Rare plants, annual beard grass and common cudweed, are retained with additional populations created through translocation. A management plan is in place with monitoring.

Following maximising biodiversity on site, Protected Road Verge enhancement schemes, with a focus on pollinators was chosen in liaison with PCC to deliver enhancement to a linear stretch of 57km of road verge (over 12 ha) which was a biodiversity need in the local area, increasing connectivity, maximising the biodiversity benefit secured for the 30-year period. It also contributes to the B-Lines & Pollinator Action Plans which form part of the PCCs Biodiversity Strategy.

As we move towards mandatory 10% BNG for new development in November 2023, the need for offsetting in relation to brownfield redevelopments will increase. Reuse of land should be preferable to green field development and this approach offers a solution when on-site design has been maximised. It also provides an example where developers and the LPA can work together to deliver local biodiversity goals while facilitating much needed development.

Management is directed to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and targeted at keystone species. John Clare Country is primarily limestone and as such the soils are calcareous and basic. The target habitat to achieve will be g2a Lowland Calcareous Grassland which is a nationally scarce habitat.

The implemented methodology for reaching target habitat within PRV areas is a process of seeding and modified cutting / arising removal regime. Two cuts and collection of all arisings will be performed each year within the enhancement areas. Timings will be varied to match flower periods of plants present.



Map showing areas of site identified as supporting by Open Mosaic Habitat (shown in blue) – areas were retained on site where possible in line with the mitigation hierarchy.

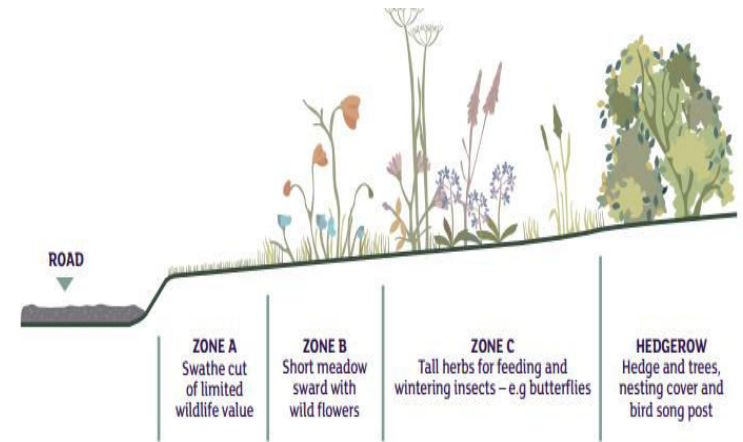


Diagram detailing the targeted road verge enhancement habitat composition.



Further information

This intervention did not replace good ecological practice, the mitigation hierarchy was followed, avoiding impact where possible and maximising the value of biodiversity on site.

The PRVs enhancement was selected through discussions with Rowan Rumball (PCC Wildlife Officer) and Darren Sharpe (PCC Natural & Historic Environment Manager). Rowan Rumball stated in relation to the project:

“There is a unique opportunity here to both achieve the net gain targets for an important town centre development, improve large areas of grassland and achieve habitat connectivity. These objectives are in line with PCCs local policy and can be financed through the biodiversity net gain. PRVs account for 57km of road verges within John Clare Country. Whether that is through high species diversity or the presences of a nationally important population of an individual species”.

We hope that projects like this provide inspiration for collaboration and delivering local targeted biodiversity needs.

Project Team

- Arcadis Consulting (UK) Ltd
- Trebor Developments
- Crown Packaging Manufacturing UK Limited
- Hillwood



Pictures showing examples of the road verge habitat enhancements (at Year 1 of enhancements – continual)



The Crown Packaging facility in development on the site – retained areas of open mosaic habitat can be seen along with new areas of habitat works