

Road building affecting badgers, water voles and barn owls

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Background

Construction of a major new road (A1073) through arable countryside in Lincolnshire required extensive ecological consultancy input to ensure planning compliance and sustainable development.

Within the Compulsory Purchase Order boundary were two active badger setts. Proximity of Car Dyke to a proposed haul road affected water voles and barn owls were also identified as presenting potential development constraint.

Solution

An extended badger survey clarified the social structure of the badger groups. This informed the mitigation strategy, enabling a cost-effective scheme to protect the welfare of the badgers and to avoid fragmentation of the group by the new road corridor. A Natural England licence enabled closure of the two active setts. Underpasses were constructed beneath the new road and fencing was used to guide the badgers to tunnel entrances.

Following consultation with Natural England, species-specific measures enabled maintenance of habitat connectivity for water voles. For continued flow of water the temporary haul road design incorporated a culvert. This provided adequate mitigation against short and long-term impacts arising from habitat fragmentation for the duration of the temporary haul road.

To protect the welfare of water voles the banks were strimmed to ground level to discourage migration into the area prior to clearance works. To ensure that the loss of habitat was fully reversible, turf within the footprint of the temporary haul road was retained for reuse and the bank subsoil remained undisturbed during works.

Introduction of bunds at key road crossing points was designed to raise the flight path of birds while commuting and foraging, followed by monitoring for casualties to demonstrate the effectiveness of the scheme.

Outcome

Efficient and effective delivery of our services, combined with creative and innovative solutions meant that the client could factor the ecological requirements on site into the project's master plans, minimising delay and cost and enabling sustainable development.



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