

Artificial Badger Setts reduces risk to Rail Embankment at Brockenhurst

The Osborne logo is a bright pink circle containing the word "OSBORNE" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font.

The earlier the ecological challenges are understood and mitigated, the more accurate predictions are for project outcomes.

This is particularly critical on green field developments and infrastructure corridors where delay is costly and impacts can be significant to the travelling public.

PROJECT

Brockenhurst Embankment Stabilisation

CUSTOMER

Network Rail

CONTRACT

IP Southern MFF Framework – Wessex Route single source

Issue

Time was of the essence to stabilise the rail embankment at Brockenhurst in Hampshire to prevent further slippage impacting on passengers. Unfortunately, the presence of 3 badger setts threatened access for bank stabilisation.

Safely relocating badgers and their cubs during the winter breeding months had its challenges. Combined with this was the potential for the badgers to set up home further down the embankment thus exacerbating stability.

With this ecological complication and critical timing, implementing an effective and efficient solution was essential to keep the railway operational whilst still protecting the badger's habitat.

Solution

Standard methods of eviction, using one way flaps on the entrances, ran the risk of leaving the badgers homeless. Homeless badgers would potentially create new setts along the embankment.

In collaboration with our designers and Network Rail a design was developed creating artificial setts to rehome the badgers. The block built setts with interlocking pipework tunnels provided the ideal badger living environment.

Located away from the embankment they had no impact on the stability. But they were sufficiently close for the evicted badgers to relocate to them in preference to moving along the embankment.



Our design was proven to be perfect when night vision cameras confirmed the badgers rapidly acclimatised to their new home.



With the badgers safely rehomed, the main embankment stabilisation works commenced 7 days later, exactly to programme.

Outcome

As part of Network Rail's IP Southern MFF Framework, the collaborative approach to early design development was central to scheme success. By allowing sufficient time for the advance ecology works, the risk to passenger's safety and journeys was effectively controlled.

Creation of the new habitat has reduced future instability risk and increased biodiversity on the railway corridor.