

KIER HIGHWAYS, AREA 3, DEPOTS IN BLOOM 2018

AREA 3, HAMPSHIRE, BERKSHIRE & SURREY

KIER HIGHWAYS

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: Small Scale

Project Overview:

The Area 3 Environment Team launched its 2nd Depots in Bloom competition in spring 2018. The aim of the competition was for depots to create a biodiversity space onsite to encourage pollinators and create new habitats. Sites were encouraged to reuse materials from within the depot or soft estate promoting the upcycling of materials.

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

Eight of our depot sites took part in the competition. The conditions were quite mixed across the sites. Some of the depots had already taken part in last years competition in the previous year but had not maintained their areas, so they had become quite overgrown. Others were new to the competition and starting from scratch with their areas. A lot of the land at these depots was overgrown and unused surrounding car parks and storage units. The majority of the sites at the depots had no biodiversity enhancement or ecological value.

What were the reasons behind this project?

The Area 3 Environment Team wanted to improve the depot environments and provide important habitats for pollinators, as it is often lacking within the depots.

We wanted to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators on a local and global scale, encourage depots to work as a team to develop their biodiversity area and create some friendly competition between teams!



Photo taken & provided by Sophie Preece. The photo shows the 'Park Gate Depot Potting Shed Seating Area'



Photo taken & provided by Victoria Chater-Lea. Pollinators using plants in the depot gardens.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Teams were given a £25 garden voucher to help towards the purchase of pollinator plants. Teams could also spend their own money to support the project if they wanted to.

A list of pollinator plants was provided and extra points were awarded to teams that planted the greatest diversity of species. The use of waste materials was also encouraged to create quirky planters, seating areas, bird boxes and insect hotels including a special “Buginham Palace”, our first bees house made out of material found on the soft estate of the network.

Since the competition was launched this year, we have seen a huge improvement in the depot gardens with great involvement from all the employees who took part. A lot of the gardens have not only created biodiversity net gains, but also enhanced employee wellbeing with areas being used by employees for lunch or to host meetings.

As this project and competition has proven to be so successful, we have extended it out to our supply chain companies. Their judging will take place later this summer.

This type of project is really great for engaging teams on an important topic in a fun way. It can be replicated within any company with more than one office and an outside area which can be utilised. It can be scaled up or down according to company size and is beneficial in creating long term benefits for pollinators, wildlife and employees.



Photo taken & provided by Hannah Angell. A light up bug house, powered by solar.



Photo taken & provided by Victoria Chater-Lea. Bees House using material from the network.



Photo taken & provided by Daniel Sumpter. One of the depot gardens which has been used for hosting meetings.



Further information

For baselining purposes, competitors were asked to take photographs of their sites to show the conditions before and after the biodiversity enhancement. Some sites also provided booklets to the Environmental Team which captured their journey throughout the competition.

In addition to the short term benefits for this year, several sites have become so invested with their areas that they have decided to continue their good work throughout the year to maximise its longer term benefits, creating a lasting legacy.

The judging criteria used for the competition took into account the biodiversity on site including the number of different pollinator plants that have been planted, different species of pollinators seen and the level of commitment and involvement from the site.

Both the Environment Team and competitors have found the competition to be really positive. It has received excellent feedback and uptake from the sites was very good this year.

What was the motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

We wanted to engage employees, both staff based and operative based to promote biodiversity within our work place. Working for a highways company means that we manage a lot of green space along the sides of the roads and within the central reservations and we wanted to show that we can also manage the biodiversity within our own depots, which in turn will help increase the suitability for pollinators around each depot.

Both Photos taken & provided by Sophie Preece. These photos show the use of old signs being up-cycled.

Both Photos taken & provided by Victoria Chater-Lea. These photos show a water feature & a rainwater harvesting system.

