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## Environmental Reports

### Project

Refurbishment of the Bristol to Portishead Railway

### Client

Railtrack

### Background

The Bristol to Portishead railway opened in 1867 and follows a spectacular route through the Avon Gorge to the coast. Regular use of the railway ceased in 1964 and the line became overgrown with vegetation. In 1999 Railtrack investigated the feasibility of refurbishing the railway, to carry freight from Royal Portbury Docks to the mainline rail network in Bristol. Landmark was commissioned to examine the implications for the environment of re-opening the railway, and to present the findings in a public document.

### Description

The Avon Gorge is an area of great ecological, landscape and historical importance. The section through which the line passes is a candidate European Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Globally rare trees and herbaceous plants grow close to the railway, and protected species, including dormice, bats and badgers, have established strongholds in the area.

Following evaluation of detailed field surveys, the impact of both the refurbishment works and operation of the railway were predicted and specific mitigation measures devised to safeguard the sensitive environment of the Avon Gorge. The report was presented in an easy to read format, useful to both the client and contractors involved in refurbishment works, and accessible to the public. Use of the latest digital graphic techniques ensures that survey data can be readily updated and management adjusted as the project progresses.

### Client benefits

Enhanced environmental image, speedy achievement of consents and clear information for contractors.