



Reptile Translocation

Project

Myrtle Drive, Shirehampton

Client

Jephson Housing Association

Background

The site, a former allotment plot owned by Bristol City Council (BCC), was purchased by Jephson Housing Association in 2007. Landmark was commissioned to undertake ecological surveys of the site to inform a planning application for residential development. The site, which is allocated in the Adopted Bristol Local Plan for housing and as a Wildlife Network Site (WNS), is located within 100 m of the River Avon Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). In view of the dual allocation of the site, and the neighbouring SNCI, a sensitive and dynamic approach to development was required.

Description

Ecological surveys identified that the site supported a range of protected species including a moderate to high population of slow worms, a range of breeding birds, foraging badgers and also limited bat activity. A mitigation strategy which also considered the WNS status of the site was prepared and approved by the Council. The strategy was framed to retain the WNS status of the site by creating a wildlife buffer habitat, enhanced by improving the existing hedgerows and planting native trees, scrub and wildflower areas, around the perimeter of the construction area.

The strategy also included translocation of the slow worms out of the construction site. Reptile-proof fencing was installed around the perimeter of the construction area and total of 122 slow worms were removed from the site and relocated in suitable habitat, including the wildlife buffer area, the adjacent allotments and Lamplighter's Marsh. Habitat improvements for the reptiles included creation of hibernacula within the buffer habitat and Lamplighter's Marsh, creation of rough/rank grassland areas within the buffer habitat and scrub management within Lamplighter's Marsh.

The buffer habitat will continue to be enhanced and managed, and the translocated slow worm population will be monitored, throughout and following site development under an agreed management plan.

Client benefits

Planning consent achieved for sensitive, dual allocated site enabling development whilst maintaining the Wildlife Network Site function and reptile interest.