

Thameslink Programme

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Delivering Network Rail's first net positive biodiversity offset

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One of Europe's busiest commuter routes

- Upgrade existing railway

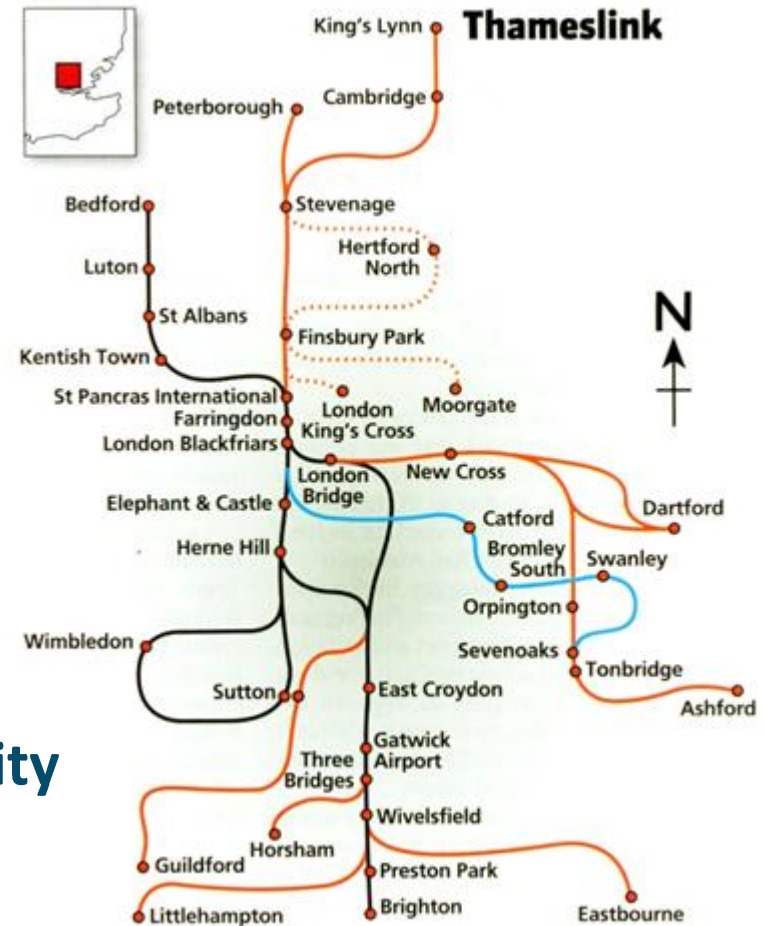
- Mitigation hierarchy: full legal compliance

- Voluntary net gain target

- But

- No standard measure of biodiversity

- Constraints to railway planting



Numbers: powerful engagement tool

Executive Board commitment

Numbers illustrated net gain roadmap

Focus on end-goal:

- Biodiversity Benefits Policy
- Training staff & supply chain
- On-site measures
- Offsetting last resort

Network Rail
Thameslink Programme Delivering Biodiversity Benefits
Policy

Biodiversity refers to all forms of life including wildlife and habitat. Biodiversity on railway land can be important for the local environment, particularly in urban locations where natural habitats are limited and fragmented. For example habitats along railway embankments can provide 'green corridors' that help wildlife move between their resting and feeding sites. Preserving and, where possible, enhancing railway biodiversity is therefore important for railway management.

The Thameslink Programme (TLP) is at the heart of Network Rail's enhancement programme. Our Sustainable Development Policy has established aims for sustainable development and we have committed to 'maintain our habitat footprint to achieve no net loss through mitigation and/or replacement and offsetting'. This requires TLP to measure both the impact on biodiversity and the gains achieved from TLP activities.

TLP aspires to go beyond protecting biodiversity. This policy establishes our approach to deliver biodiversity benefits. The policy is founded on nature conservation principles and our commitment to create an overall positive effect on the environment.

We seek to deliver biodiversity benefits by achieving the following:

Establish robust mechanisms for protecting biodiversity. We will implement robust mechanisms that are ISO14001 compliant to embed measures for protecting biodiversity within all aspects of our work. Specifically we will:

- Establish and measure the biodiversity baseline of our sites as set out in the TLP Biodiversity Offsetting procedure
- Undertake biodiversity impact assessments at the early stages of a project to embed protection measures into the planning and undertaking of work
- Design protection measures to preserve the biodiversity and primary ecological function of a site

Increase existing protection levels. We will increase and improve our protection of biodiversity by committing to the following:

- First avoiding impacts on biodiversity where possible for example by locating works away from sensitive habitats
- Second where impacts on biodiversity are incurred, mitigating to reduce the impacts where possible.
- Only if permanent loss of biodiversity is unavoidable, compensating for this loss

These actions adhere to the 'mitigation hierarchy' whereby we seek to minimise harm and maximise benefits to biodiversity from development.

Seek opportunities for on-site enhancement. We will identify and implement opportunities for enhancing biodiversity on our sites. Our on-site enhancement measures will include:

- Planting native species that enhance biodiversity of the local surroundings particularly along site boundaries in linear formations
- Seeding land with a local native grass and wildflower mix to increase native species coverage and encourage invertebrates.
- Designing enhancements to contribute towards local biodiversity action plans and conservation goals
- Designing enhancements specifically to enhance the primary ecological function of site

Compensation. We will compensate for permanent loss to biodiversity that results from works after all actions have been taken (where possible) to avoid and reduce the loss. Compensation may be on or outside our site where it provides the greatest biodiversity benefit. Off-site compensation (i.e. biodiversity offsetting) can help TLP to deliver biodiversity benefits because of the restrictions on managing railway land. These restrictions include the type and location of habitats that can be planted because of health and safety regulations. We fully acknowledge the challenges when compensating for biodiversity loss through offsetting but we will seek to minimise these risks by adhering to our 'TLP Delivering Biodiversity Benefits Procedure' that sets out guiding principles on biodiversity offsetting.

Additional measures. We will undertake 'lessons learnt' reviews to evaluate our performance, share knowledge between project teams and implement continuous improvements in our delivery of biodiversity benefits. We will also train staff to increase their awareness of biodiversity and enhance their skills in protection and enhancement measures.

This policy and our TLP Delivering Biodiversity Benefits Procedure will be cascaded through the supply chain and communicated to all persons working on the Thameslink Programme.

Jim Crawford
Major Programme Director
January 2015

N200-NRT-POL-CN-000002
IMS Level 3A v1.0



- Choice of offset provider critical
- Partnership with London Wildlife Trust & Lambeth Council



Streatham Common Biodiversity Offsetting Project

On behalf of Lambeth Council I am writing to confirm that we both welcome and support proposals to use Streatham Common as a receptor site for delivery of a pilot project to test the benefits of biodiversity offsetting, as part of a scheme involving a number of neighbouring Wildlife Trusts along the route of the Thameslink rail route between Bedford and Brighton.

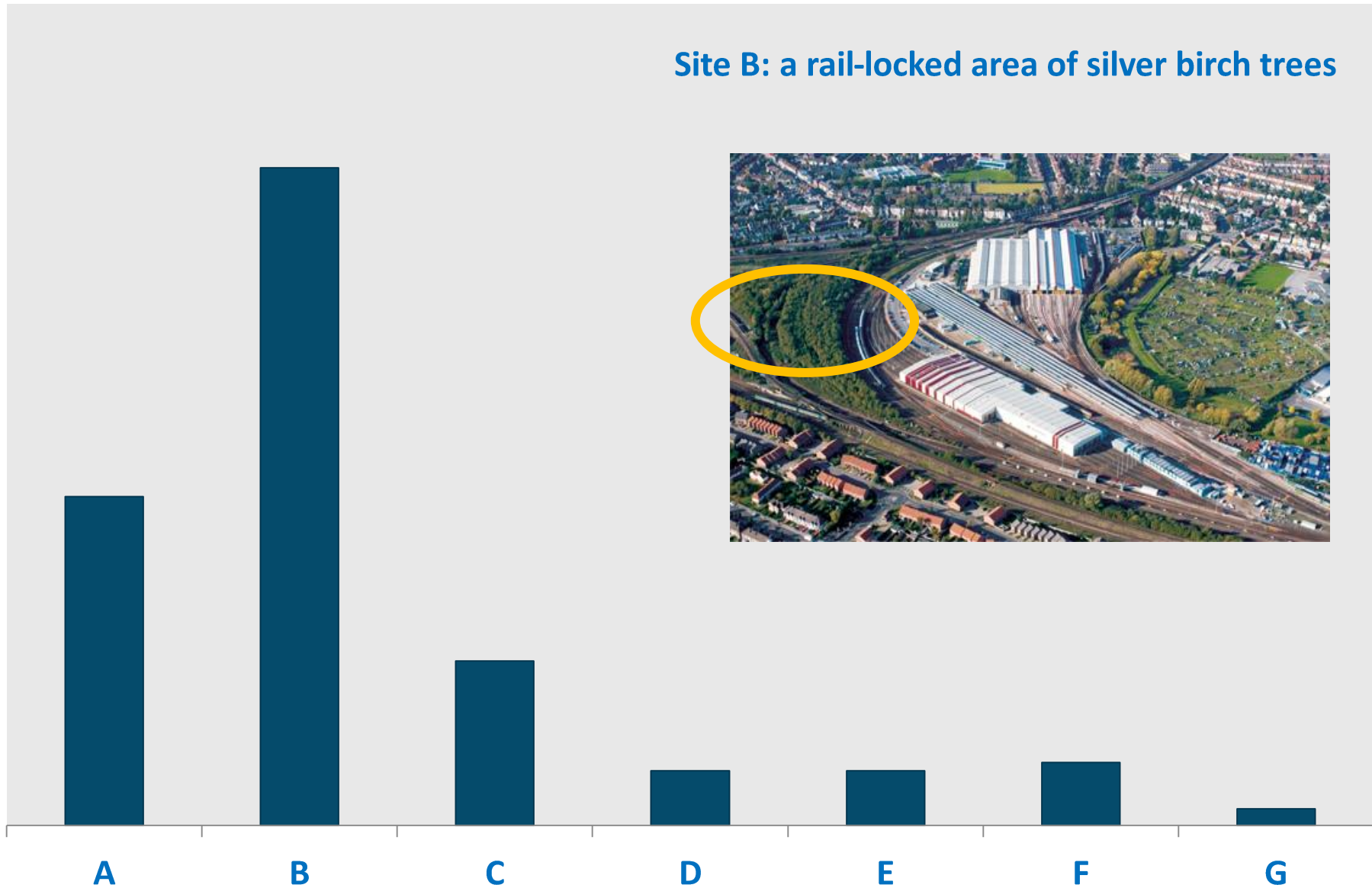
- Numbers are communication & management tools
- Effective only *after* understanding biodiversity

Site	Nature Conservation Value	Primary Ecological Function
A	Low	Green corridor
<u>B</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Rail-locked trees</u>
C	Low	Limited green corridor
D	Low	Limited green corridor
E	Very Low	Very limited temporary wildlife shelter
F	<u>Low-moderate</u>	<u>Some temporary wildlife shelter</u>
H	Low	Limited green corridor
G	Very Low	Very limited temporary wildlife shelter

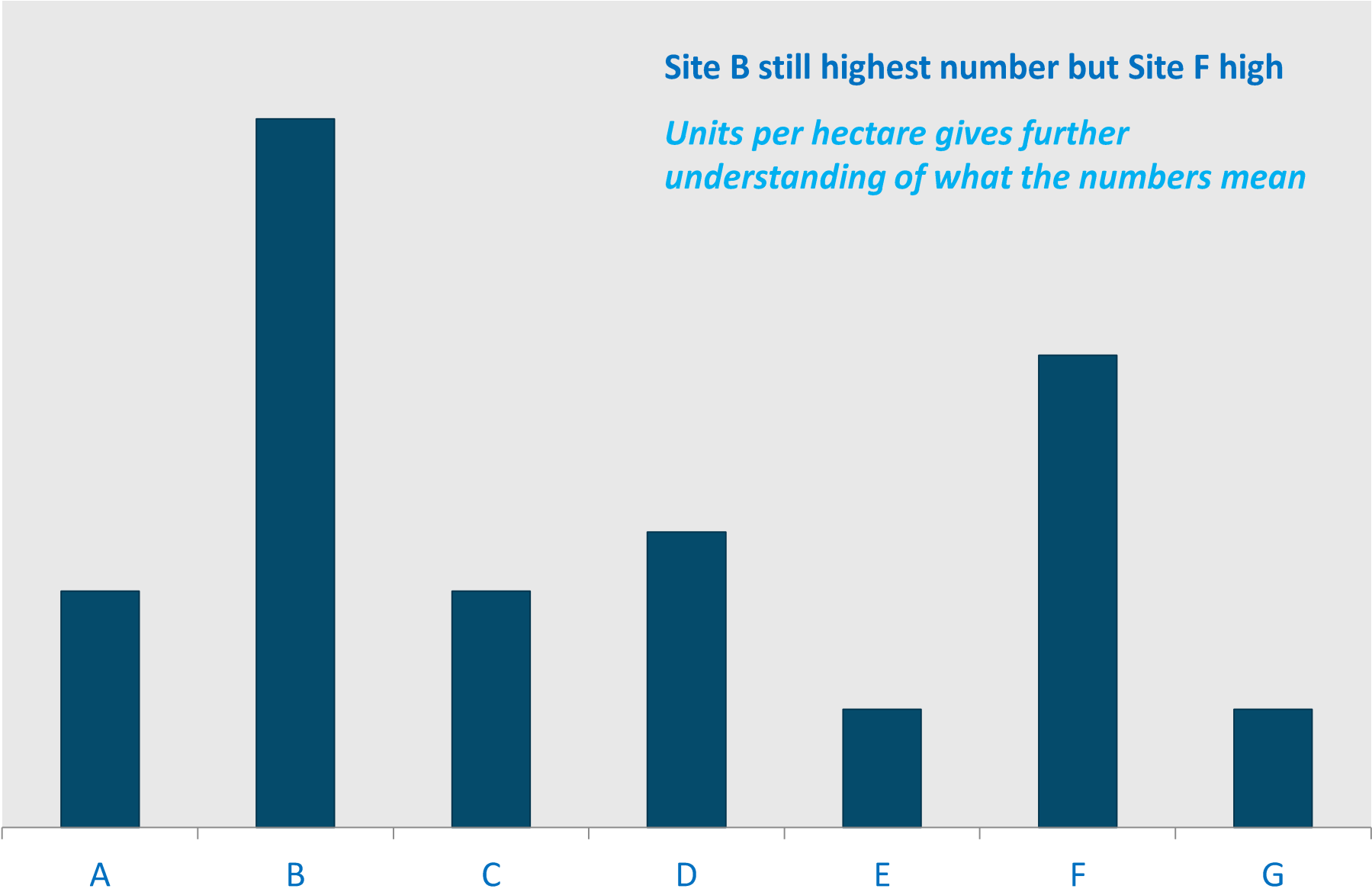


Total biodiversity baseline units

Site B: a rail-locked area of silver birch trees



Biodiversity baseline units per hectare



**Distance to
Thameslink**

**Diverse native
woodland**

**Designated nature
reserve**

**Contribute to a
biodiversity
strategy**

**Increase
connectivity**

**Bring people closer
to nature**

**Timescale matching
Thameslink build**

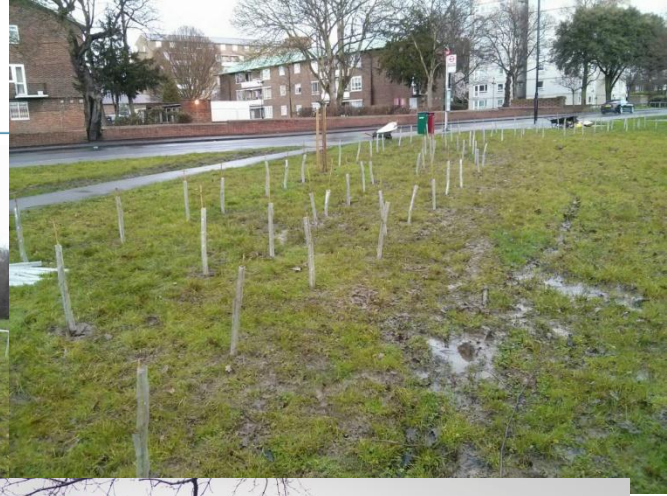
**Thameslink
involvement**

Additional

Restoring the Great North Wood

Streatham Common is a local nature reserve & public park

- ✓ enhancing for wildlife
- ✓ a net-gain for Thameslink
- ✓ increasing public enjoyment



An offset in perpetuity...BOMP

- Years 1 to 3: London Wildlife Trust
- Thereafter: Lambeth Council as land owners

- **Focus on the end goal**
- **Formalise no net loss / net gain**
- **Measure biodiversity as standard but ensure meaning**
- **Empower staff & supply chain**
- **Grassroots collaboration for offsets**
- **Secure wider benefits of an offset**

