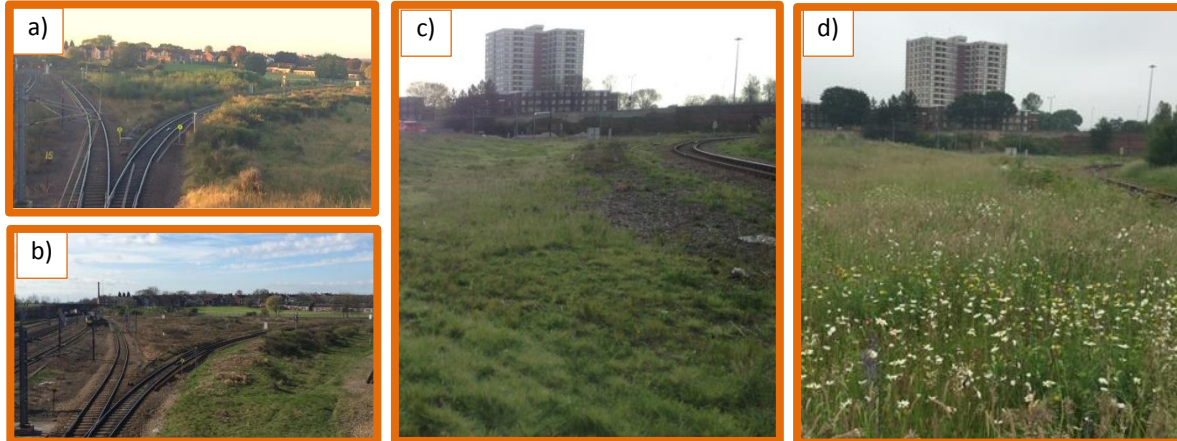NetworkRail

Grassland creation
*Ecology and biodiversity – **an environmental case study***

a) before scrub clearance; b) during scrub clearance; c) after seeding; d) grassland in flower.

The project

The Doncaster Rail Triangle is about 2 hectares of land cut off by rail lines situated the centre of the town in a highly urban and industrial area. The work formed part of a larger scale vegetation programme to remove scrub due its impact on signal visibility particularly due to the tight curvature of the line at this rail intersection. The Doncaster Maintenance Protection Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the Off Track Team, proposed the creation of a wildflower meadow with express aim of contributing visually to green space in the centre of the town.

The key benefits delivered

The reduction in height of the vegetation in the triangle has cleared the signal and track worker visibility issues. Moreover, the removal of the scrub has exposed a number if hazards created by redundant materials many of which, such as old sleepers, have been relocated to safe areas and are being utilised as habitat features.

The engagement with the local teams has been beneficial, especially as the idea was generated locally, species choice advice obtained from the vegetation contractors and contact made with the local wildlife trust to provide guidance on use of redundant materials as habitat and subsequent maintenance of the grassland area.

Lessons learned

- Removal of scrub exposed uneven ground and waste materials that caused damage to machinery increasing expected costs and time.
- There are opportunities to turn redundant sleepers and ballast piles into habitat features which, when placed at strategic locations can provide biodiversity stepping stones for wildlife – more importantly simple signage will reduce the likelihood of them damaging machinery or presenting trip hazards.

Who to contact for more information

Neil Strong – Environment Manager – Network Rail
Email: neil.strong@networkrail.co.uk

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