

### ***Barnard's Lock Environmental Incident***

Issued to: **All Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and RISQS registered contractors**

Ref: NRL19-09

Date of issue: 05/06/2019

Location: Barnard's Lock, Newbury, West Berkshire

Contact: Suzanne Kay, Head of S&SD IP Western and Wales



### **Overview**

Network Rail, IP Western were tasked with undertaking a bridge deck replacement over the River Kennett using a 1200 tonne crane.

The works were being undertaken in an ecologically sensitive location near the River Kennet. This is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) with the potential for water voles, reptiles, birds and bats as raised in the Phase 1 Habitat Survey.

Planned vegetation clearance works were set to take place removing 10,000sq metres of wet woodland ready for the installation of a work area.

The works commenced without an Environment Management Plan on-site.

Additionally, throughout the works there were numerous misunderstandings of the locations of ecologically sensitive areas.

### **Underlying causes**

During the planning of the works there was a change in the contractor's Lead Project Manager. There was no handover information communicated between the two. This led to an oversight in sending the required ecology information to the Site Operator on time for the works.

Furthermore, though there was a good amount of engagement with the ecologists, opportunities were missed to mark the trees and specify the exact locations of ecologically sensitive areas.

Due to this, and pressure to meet the programme, the contractor Site Manager decided to use a best guess approach instead of following the recommendations in the Work Package Plan, as well as failing to brief out the ecological constraints of the works to the site team.

### **Key message**

When determining the location of ecologically sensitive areas, GIS coordinates should always be communicated alongside maps and other visual aids.

At no time should anyone work outside their competencies to ensure they meet the timing of the programme.

When there is a change in personnel, whether this be in Network Rail or a contractor, a formal handover session must be undertaken to ensure all ecology constraints and actions are understood.