

# Network Rail completes Highland vegetation work

December 7, 2022



**Network Rail** has completed work to clear trees and vegetation on an eight-mile stretch of railway between Evanton and Invergordon in the Scottish Highlands.

The work was needed to keep passengers safe and trains punctual and to reduce the risk for lineside neighbours.

Working from August until November, the team cleared trees and vegetation to create a safe and maintainable rail corridor which will help to reduce delays and improve performance on services through the area.

To protect the local ecology and to compensate for the removal of trees, 16 bat and 16 bird boxes were installed and leftover small branches were used to create habitat piles to support invertebrates and insects and to improve the overall diversity of the line. A pine-marten den was also created.

As it was not practical to replant lineside at the location where the vegetation was removed, more than 400 trees and shrubs compatible with the railway environment were planted at near-by Bunchrew.

To protect and assist the tree planting, biodegradable tree shelters and mulch mats have been used instead of plastic, as a more environmentally friendly option to protect the saplings.

Kirsty Armstrong, Network Rail's project manager for the vegetation clearance work said, said: "While our priority is the safety and performance of the railway, this project has been planned and delivered in a way that is really positive for the railway and demonstrates how we can manage the lineside environment to protect wildlife and promote biodiversity.

"We have taken a number of proactive steps to off-set the impact of removing trees and created a mixture of habitats to support the many and varied species that live alongside the railway. It sets the standard for sustainable management of the lineside environment for the future.

"We want to thank the local community for their understanding while we delivered the project."

*Photo credit: Network Rail*