

Network Rail shares how it manages the lineside environment

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Network Rail Scotland recently demonstrated to stakeholders first-hand how they safely manage vegetation around the railway.

Teams across the region/route offered insight into the organisation's work at an event which included elected members, membership bodies representing landowners, utility companies, rail manufacturers, and council officers.

Participants were shown the what, why and how of our tree and vegetation management work and heard about the increasing threat posed to Scotland's railway from ash dieback and how Network Rail is planning for this.

Presenters also covered information about ecology, habitat and wildlife and outlined some of the sustainability measures being implemented on trial projects across the rail network.

Following the success of the first of its kind event in Glasgow, it is anticipated that it will be repeated at other locations across the country to enable more local partners and stakeholders to find out about how

Network Rail is evolving its approach to managing its lineside assets.

Jonathan Callis senior asset manager for Network Rail said: “The railway touches almost every community in Scotland. We know that our work not only impacts the millions who travel by rail but also our lineside neighbours and adjacent landowners.

“This type of event is a unique opportunity to further develop and improve engagement with landowners and estates across the length and breadth of the country.

Councillor Mark McGeever who is Chair of South Lanarkshire Council’s Climate Change and Sustainability Committee said: “Protecting our environment is now a crucial issue for every organisation and It was great to hear how Network Rail is making a difference by considering the environmental impact of what it does.

“Their ways of working are very relevant to local authorities. There are obvious parallels between ensuring tracks are clear and that train drivers can see the signals, and councils ensuring roads are safe and that motorists can see signs.

“It’s clear that simple steps can have a positive effect – like where trees have to be felled, doing so in ways that creates habitats for local wildlife.

“While environmental responsibilities are often made to sound like a bit of a burden, the truth is they also offer huge opportunities to make things better for people who live and work here.

“That’s something we in local government need to understand and take advantage of, and I’m glad to see it’s a philosophy shared by Network Rail.”