



Recycled material from mains project helps rebuild island

An island in the River Medway is being transformed, **thanks to recycled material** from our Victorian Mains Replacement work.

A proportion of the spoil dug up in the huge London project is processed and then taken by barge to Hoo Island, formerly used by the Ministry of Defence.

The recycling is made possible by an innovative partnership between Thames and three other organisations, and is making huge sustainability savings.

The recycling began in 2007, when our Waste Manager, Alan Young, began discussions with Hoo's owners, Peel Ports, who wanted to return it to nature following its military use.

The island's salt marshes, mudflats and lagoons make it a Site of Special Scientific Interest, important for birds as feeding and nesting grounds.

Work began about a year ago. Excavated VMR material is reprocessed by sub-contractors H Sivyer at Victoria Deep Water Terminal in Greenwich, and surplus material is then loaded on to barges run by Peel Ports' partners, GPS Marine.

The barges transport the material along the Thames and into the Medway in Kent, where it is used to construct earthworks.

Alan said: "Around 87 per cent of the spoil delivered to Victoria Deep from the VMR is reprocessed as aggregates, which are used



again in VMR for pipe bedding, ballast or foam concrete for reinstating roads.

"The remainder is taken to Hoo Island along the river, which prevents thousands of lorry journeys. It would otherwise go to landfill, but this alternative is much more sustainable, as well as being cheaper than the Landfill Tax we'd otherwise pay.

"We have built up gradually to the point where we're now re-using up to 4,000 tonnes a week via this route. It's the ultimate recycling story.

"In the future, we'll be working with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Natural England to ensure the island is reinstated to a suitable condition."

The project recently reached the finals of the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management Awards for Environmental Excellence. It is just one of the recycling schemes that have helped win us praise from the government-backed Waste Resource Action Programme.

Alan, who chairs the National Joint Utility Group on Sustainability, said: "We are acknowledged as exemplars in the recycling sector.

"The Government have set a target of halving the amount of material sent to landfill by 2012, and at Thames we have already reduced the proportion we send from about 60 per cent to ten per cent."