### Key Issues –

Identified the key environmental issues associated with the project through considering all potential significant impacts to the ‘Planning Area’ a 259 hectares (ha) site encompassing the 80.25ha planning application site.

Inter-relationship between EIA’s prepared under two differing consenting regimes, and EIA regulations: Forestry and the Town and Country Planning system.

Clear engagement and communication strategy acknowledging the variety of stakeholders/interest groups involved in a project of such national/regional/local importance, complicated by the application site crossing the boundaries of three separate local planning authorities.

Integrating the EIA process into the design competition for developing the visitor centre, ensuring the design was informed by the environmental constraints.

### Purpose of the project

The purpose of this project is to undertake the necessary environmental assessment work to provide the necessary environmental information required for the Local Planning Authorities as a cross boundary application, to reach a reasoned planning decision. The application is due to be submitted in May 2017.

### Description of the project

Bidwells were appointed to coordinate an Environmental Impact Assessment, and prepare an Environmental Statement to accompany a joint hybrid planning application on behalf of the Woodland Trust for the creation of a car park, entrance, hard surfaced and multi-user paths (full application), visitors’ centre and memorial area (outline application). The proposals assessed form part of wider future proposals to plant 200,000 trees to form a Centenary Woodland for England to commemorate the First World War.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons learnt</th>
<th>Lessons learnt cont. -</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Effective Communication</strong></td>
<td><strong>EIA as an integral process</strong></td>
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<td>Given the nature of these proposals crossing three separate local planning authority boundaries, and given the applicant and the national profile of this project, the number of stakeholders and consultees involved, it was important to keep open dialogue with all parties, and clearly define roles and responsibilities, particularly in agreeing the lead consenting authority, and its collaboration with the other two.</td>
<td>Worked closely with the client, design and technical team to ensure the EIA process was integral to the development of the proposals, clearly defining the key parameters against which the assessment was based.</td>
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<td>This open dialogue culminated in a series of workshops and stakeholder events to feed into the scope of the EIA process and its influence over the design of the proposals.</td>
<td>This integral approach allowed the likely significant environmental effects to be identified to the project team at the earliest opportunity, which resulted in many being avoided or minimised, with the consequence of avoiding expensive mitigation, saving the client and the project money.</td>
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**Landscape and Ecology Led Proposals**

From the outset, the environmental constraints and sensitivity of the location, were recognised and key drivers in developing the proposals, iteratively evolving as more baseline environmental survey work came from the assessment process.

**Contact details**

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