### Key Issues

- Sensitive balancing of zoological exhibits and visitor infrastructure with site environmental sensitivities.
- Effective scoping process to identify potential significant effects.
- Careful consideration of alternative site masterplanning and design solutions.
- Mitigation of operational impacts on the historic landscape, settings of heritage assets and key views.
- Mitigation of construction and operational impacts on protected species and wildlife habitats.
- Mitigation of construction impacts on archaeology.

### Purpose of the project

The National Wildlife Conservation Park is a project promoted by the Bristol, Clifton and West of England Zoological Society Ltd as the first development of its kind in the UK. The project’s vision is to be ‘an iconic, world-class visitor attraction that combines an exciting and fun experience with the more serious messages of conservation and environmental sustainability. It will be a conservation-led wildlife park of international quality that will champion and support national and international conservation, demonstrate and encourage widespread sustainability and actively engage visitors in a wide range of animal and plant conservation projects.’ The Park was championed by the South West Regional Development Agency as a flagship tourism and economic development project.

### Description of the project

The Park is located on land in the Hollywood Tower Estate, north-west of Bristol near junction 17 of the M5. The development proposals comprise themed exhibits (including British Wetlands, Congo Basin Tropical Forest, Central American Swamp and African Savannah) and a range of visitor facilities (including a visitor village, car parking and access). Planning permission for the National Wildlife Conservation Park was granted in 2010, and the initial phase of the development (known as the Wild Place Project) opened in 2013.
Lessons learnt

A key challenge for the design and EIA process was to ensure that the project’s global environmental sustainability aims could be delivered without having unacceptable local environmental impacts.

Established in 1820, the Hollywood Tower Estate comprises a mansion and associated buildings set within a designed parkland landscape, a mosaic of small fields enclosed by hedgerows, ancient semi-natural woodland and a range of constructed wetlands. The landscape supports habitats and species of nature conservation value including: bats, amphibians, reptiles, invertebrate assemblages and a range of bird species.

In recognition of the site’s environmental sensitivities, a landscape-led masterplan was developed to enable the development requirements to be sensitively accommodated, whilst allowing valued environmental features to be conserved and enhanced as an integral part of the site’s green infrastructure network.

An effective scoping process, undertaken in consultation with the planning authority and statutory consultees, was critical to ensuring that the EIA focused on assessment of the project’s significant construction and operation effects. Other topics and potential effects that were unlikely to give rise to significant effects were scoped out from the EIA.

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