**Key Issues –**
This case study will focus on the ecological aspects of the proposed Chilmington Green development as an example of best practice for masterplan-led sustainable urban extensions. Key issues include:

- The importance of a robust baseline – a range of ecological surveys were carried out to inform the EIA.
- How liaison with statutory consultees can help overcome planning obstacles – throughout the design process there was detailed consultation with Natural England, Ashford Borough Council and the Kent Wildlife Trust.
- The importance of ecological input in the design team – ecological mitigation and compensation measures were at the heart of the masterplan rather than add-ons.

**Purpose of the project**
To develop a sustainable new settlement comprising: residential dwellings, employment and retail facilities as well as education and community facilities (developer consortium of Hodson Developments, Malcolm Jarvis Homes Ltd, Pentland Homes Ltd and Ward Homes (a Trading Name of BDW Trading Ltd)).

**Description of the project**
Located approximately 2km from Ashford, Kent, the site covers an area of 415ha of largely undeveloped agricultural land with several areas of woodland centred on the hamlet of Chilmington Green. The proposed mixed-use development will comprise up to 5,750 residential units; employment areas; retail use; education facilities; community and leisure uses; and areas of formal and informal open space. Built in 4 phases over 20 years the development will be a sustainable urban extension to Ashford.
## EIA Learning Outcomes

### Lessons learnt
Commissioning the baseline studies well in advance of the planning application enabled the findings to be incorporated into the masterplan at an early stage.

Consultation with relevant stakeholders (Natural England, Environment Agency, Ashford Borough Council and Kent Wildlife Trust) was also started at an early stage and continued throughout the assessment. This allowed the survey and assessment approach and level of detail required for the planning application to be agreed in advance thus reducing the risk of objections.

Features of greatest ecological value will be retained and incorporated into the green infrastructure network, a series of open spaces, corridors and green 'fingers', which also incorporates the landscape and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. Existing areas of ancient woodland and species-rich hedges would be retained and enhanced and new linkages created between them to improve connectivity at a landscape scale.

### Lessons learnt cont:-
An ecological mitigation, enhancement and compensation strategy was agreed with Natural England.

Easily re-creatable habitats (e.g. grassland) will be replaced on a like for like basis. Impacts to habitats not easily re-created will be compensated for by replacement and enhancement using replacement ratios agreed with Natural England.

Overall, the proposed development in isolation, and in combination with other committed developments in the vicinity, is considered likely to have either a negligible or positive impact of up to local significance upon the ecological receptors identified.

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