

2.1 Assessment of Compensation/Mitigation Package – Outline of process followed

1. The Council has responded to the Core Strategy Planning Inspector's request for further information in assessing if a compensation package was feasible in mitigating for nightingale habitat loss at Lodge Hill. The Council commissioned independent environmental experts to carry out work in this area, and put a robust and inclusive process in place to involve stakeholders throughout this work.
2. The key stages in this process were:

- **Technical Meeting – 25 September 2012**

The purpose of the meeting was to agree technical and scientific matters and methodology to enable the next steps in the assessment process to be progressed.

Invites were issued to those organisations with scientific background and expertise to inform the technical discussions. Alongside Medway Council, these were RSPB, Natural England, Kent Wildlife Trust, Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway, Land Securities and its consultants, Medway Countryside Forum. The invite was extended to Bioscan on behalf of Palm Developments* following representations made to the Inspector. (*Note that Bioscan subsequently clarified that its clients were McCulloch Homes, Rochester Bridgewood and Medway Sports & Leisure).

Copies of the attendance list and invite to the meeting are attached for information.

This was followed up by a series of tasks to inform a subsequent stakeholder workshop:

- BTO report into nightingale habitat
- Site survey work at Lodge Hill to determine condition of existing habitat for nightingales
- Assessment work led by GGKM to identify potential sites for compensatory nightingale habitat, and site survey work to determine suitability.
- Application of Defra metrics to determine the amount of land that would be required for biodiversity offsetting.

- **Stakeholder meeting – 9 November 2012**

This was informed by the outputs of the research and technical work highlighted above. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the assessment of biodiversity offsetting for nightingale habitat. Invites were issued to all who had made representations on the matter of the Lodge Hill strategic allocation at the Core Strategy Hearings, and the

appropriate organisations that had carried out technical work in this area. Details of the invites, attendance at the meeting and notes of the discussions are attached.

- **Report into assessment of biodiversity offsetting for nightingale habitat**

A draft copy of the report was circulated to workshop participants for comments. EBL considered the submissions made and produced a final copy of the report on 7 December. Copies of the comments made on the draft, and the consultants' responses to these are attached.