Contents

OUR MANAGEMENT PLANS

Divisional Plan
The Divisional Plan explains about the City of London Corporation and Open Spaces Department; as well as detailing our strategy, aims and methods. It also explains the quality standards we strive to achieve as we deliver our work activities on the City Commons.

Local Plans
There are separate Local Plans for the seven City Commons – you are reading the Local Plan for Ashtead Common National Nature Reserve (NNR). They describe the important features of each site and set out a vision for their future management. The Local Plans explain how the aims are applied to each site and how our work on the site turns a vision into reality. They include a ten-year work programme for the site, setting out our priorities.

Site Manuals
The Site Manuals detail the work activities planned to implement our aims. They contain annual work programmes, supported by maps and prescriptions used to seek relevant permissions and consents, and to set the standards for our work.

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The City of London Corporation

The City Corporation is a uniquely diverse organisation with three main aims: to support and promote the City as the world leader in international finance and business services; to provide high quality local government services and policing for the Square Mile; and to provide valued services to London and the nation as a whole.

A legal duty to manage

The City of London’s open spaces are protected under their own Acts of Parliament, brought in to acquire land for the recreation and enjoyment of the public and to protect these sites from development and enclosure. The Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878 empowers us to appoint people to protect and manage our open spaces.

As a public body the City Corporation is required by law to comply with certain duties relating to conservation, as set out in the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006. These require us to take reasonable measures to enhance the aesthetic, cultural, historical and biological interest of its open spaces.

The Open Spaces Department

The City Corporation owns open spaces, parks and gardens in and around London, as part of its commitment to sustaining a world-class city. Each open space has charitable status and is a unique resource, managed by its Open Spaces Department for the use and enjoyment of the public and for the conservation of historic landscapes and wildlife.

The City Commons

Ashtead Common is one of seven open spaces managed together as the City Commons. It lies within the area governed by Mole Valley District Council, north of Leatherhead.

The City Commons team will provide:

Quality open spaces - conserve and enhance our unique landscapes by striving for excellence.

An inclusive service - engage with our communities and partners to promote learning, volunteering and healthy living.

A sustainable future - create environmental strategies that safeguard our open spaces and demonstrate sustainable management.

An opportunity for all - promote our services to enable access for all.

Capable and motivated people - value our staff and volunteers and support their personal development.
This Local Plan outlines the important features and history of the site and explains the work that will ensure Ashtead Common continues to thrive, both as part of the local landscape and of a wider green infrastructure serving Surrey and South London.

Ashtead Common is a 200 hectare (500 acre) area of wooded common within the Metropolitan Green Belt. It is an important and diverse part of our local cultural and natural heritage, shaped by its geology, history and previous land use. Ashtead Common remains part of a ‘green arc’ of parks, gardens and open spaces that links London with the wider countryside of Surrey.

A thriving centre for clay tile production in Roman times, the heavy clay soils meant that the site was managed as wood pasture instead of being developed for farming.

This has left a legacy of 2,303 ancient oak pollards which, with their associated old growth and decay, led to the site being designated as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) in 1995.

In addition to these veteran trees, the site supports a wide diversity of habitats and wildlife. The mosaic of ancient woodland, scrub grassland, meadow, ponds and streams means there is much to discover. Beetles, butterflies, birds, mammals and wild flowers abound and the seasonal changes ensure endless variety.

The City Corporation team uses traditional methods such as pollarding, coppicing, hay making and grazing to look after the site. Rangers, contractors and volunteers manage the site so that present and future generations of visitors can enjoy the open space.

But Ashtead is more than a nature reserve or museum: it is a place where local people and visitors from further away can enjoy the peace and quiet of the countryside just a stone’s throw from London.

Nature lovers, walkers, cyclists and horse riders can explore rights of way, enjoying the tranquillity of this beautiful wooded common. A programme of guided walks, events and educational activities ensures that school children and other visitors are able to find out more about the site and its management.

The landscape we see and value today was created by a system of management that lasted hundreds of years. The challenge for the City Corporation is to mix this traditional management with 21st century expertise and expectations and to ensure that Ashtead Common is more than a green island in the urban fringe.
Introduction - Visitor map
Location

Ashtead Common (grid reference TQ 175 598) lies south-west of the City of London in the north-eastern part of the county of Surrey, between Leatherhead and Epsom. It is bounded on the northern edge by farmland, to the south by Ashtead village, to the east by Epsom Common and to the west by the remnants of Thorncroft and Leatherhead Commons.

Ownership

In 1991 the City Corporation bought the freehold of Ashtead Common and title of Lord of the Manor. Prior to this it was part of the Manor of Ashtead and is first recorded in the Domesday Book: this states that before 1066 Thorgils held the manor from Earl Harold.

Adjoining areas of green space and agricultural land are owned by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, the Crown Estate, Merton College and Mole Valley District Council.

Site status

Ashtead Common was acquired and designated a Public Open Space under the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878.

The owners of Newton Wood have certain rights over the common under the Commons Registration Act 1965. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt as shown on the Local Plan for Mole Valley.

Surrey County Council listed the site as a candidate Area of Special Historic Landscape Value due to the regional importance of its historical features.

In 1955 180 ha (450 acres) of the site were designated as part of the Epsom & Ashtead Commons Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), with its diverse habitats and invertebrate and bird populations being of special importance. Woodfield, an 8 ha (23 acre) damp hay meadow, is listed as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

Ashtead Common was declared a National Nature Reserve (NNR) in 1995, in recognition of the importance of wood decay and related invertebrates in the veteran trees and deadwood.

Like our other open spaces Ashtead Common has charitable status and is partly funded by the City Corporation. The City Corporation claims financial entitlements for managing common land under the Single Payment Scheme and must meet the requirements for cross compliance. Parts of the Common are subject to an Environmental Stewardship Scheme agreement with Natural England.

Utility services

Five utility companies have statutory rights of access onto the site to repair and maintain their structures, apparatus and services.

There are two Scheduled Monuments of national importance - the ancient earthworks and the Roman villa.
Visitor appeal
Ashtead Common is well used throughout the year, mostly by local residents but also by visitors from further afield. Visitors are attracted by its natural aspect (incongruously close to suburban Surrey and London) with its veteran trees and local distinctiveness.

Visitor access
The site is easily accessed by foot, on bike or on horseback. The majority of visitors come from the surrounding residential areas. There are regular bus services from Epsom, Leatherhead, Chessington and Dorking. Ashtead station, with links to Horsham, Guildford, Dorking, Croydon and London is adjacent to the site.

Visitor facilities
There are no car parks, toilets or refreshment facilities on the site although information is available from the Ashtead Estate Office (open Monday to Friday, 9 am to 4.30 pm) and on wooden notice boards.

The low-key countryside furniture is made from local sustainable timber. Access is improved for visitors by providing hard-surfaced tracks on key routes where appropriate.

Community involvement
Local people were involved with the Common before the City Corporation bought the site and certainly since we began our community approach to its management. Many of our local visitors act as ‘eyes and ears’ on the site, reporting any problems to the rangers.

A local resource
Our well-established volunteer team meets regularly to contribute to the management of the site. Volunteers carry out practical tasks, as well as undertaking wildlife and visitor surveys and helping with our events throughout the year.

Visitors use the site for informal recreation - watching nature, walking, running, cycling and horse riding - and to participate in organised events licensed by the City of London. Where possible, the rangers respond positively to requests from local schools and colleges to use Ashtead Common as an ‘outdoor classroom’.

Site Description - A valued open space
**Topography**
Ashtead Common covers a ridge running east to west with low-lying flat areas to the south. The central, highest point is 88 metres above sea level. There are many depressions and bumps, some created by human activity such as quarrying in Roman times.

**Geology and soils**
The site lies on London clay, overlain with a sandy or silt layer of varying depth. There is Plateau gravel at the ridge top and on the lower slopes. The heavy, impermeable clay has given rise to, for the most part, neutral/acidic, infertile and waterlogged soils unsuitable for agriculture. The clay made Ashtead an ideal site for the production of tiles during the Roman occupation of Britain.

**Hydrology**
The impermeable clay and poor drainage means that the site becomes muddy in winter and during heavy rain. In summer the clay dries to a hard, dusty surface.

There are two springs on the north-facing slopes of the ridge and three seasonal streams. The availability of freshwater, albeit with a relatively high mineral content, undoubtedly attracted early human settlers.

The lower flat areas of the site, such as Woodfield and the areas of scrub grassland near Woodlands Road in Epsom, become waterlogged during wet periods.

The Rye Brook runs through the lowest part of the site; following heavy rain it can cause flash-flooding of surrounding land. There are four permanent ponds and a network of boundary and drainage ditches.
River Restoration

The Rye is a tributary of the River Mole that flows through Ashtead Common. Since the 1950s, flooding has increased due to housing development in a large part of its catchment area. In 2006 the City worked with Natural England, The Environment Agency and Ashtead Residents’ Association to reduce the associated risks.

River restoration encourages natural processes such as erosion, the depositing of minerals and occasional flooding of wetland habitats. To achieve this, the City employed a River Engineer to design a scheme that reintroduced bends into the river channel and changed its banks to a more natural profile.

Experienced contractors created a mosaic of ponds and shallow pools alongside the new channel that fill with water when the Rye floods. They used excavated material to construct a low embankment across the river corridor. This structure controls flood water passing downstream, protecting local houses while filling wetland habitats more frequently.

The restored river corridor provides a diversity of habitats, improving the quality of the entire river system. Such schemes will play an important part in mitigating the effects of climate change on people’s homes, by containing flood water in natural land formations.

A key objective of the project was to improve wildlife on the site. Ecological surveys show that this aspect of the project was a success. By enhancing habitats, we have created new homes for a variety of insects, amphibians, reptiles and breeding birds.

Educational resources about flood control and wetland ecology were created and a workable model for natural floodplain restoration developed. Public enjoyment of the new river landscape was enhanced by the building of easy access paths, the fitting of handrails and the sculpting of shallow banks.

The local community were consulted extensively before the project began and kept informed during construction. The collaboration of rangers, contractors and local volunteers ensured that the restoration was completed safely, on time and within budget.

This integrated approach delivered economic, environmental and social benefits on Ashtead Common for present and future generations. The entire project required careful planning and design to make it a success, resulting in a restored river environment to be proud of.
Past land use
With easily accessible timber and freshwater, plus a defensible position in the local landscape, Ashtead Common has been occupied since prehistoric times. The ancient earthwork originates from the Iron Age or even earlier and has then been used by different people throughout time.

A significant industrial complex was built during the Roman period including a corridor villa, bath-house, tile kilns and clay pits. It is reasonable to assume that active management of woodland and trees started at this point, if not earlier. The settlement and buildings associated with the tile industry disappeared after Roman influence in Britain declined.

The heavy soils made Ashtead Common unsuitable for agricultural development. Instead of arable farming, a system of wood pasture developed. Pollarding of oak trees during the Tudor period produced a renewable crop of fodder, fuel and timber for those living on or near the site. The open grassland between the trees was grazed by deer, cattle, poultry, pigs and later by sheep.

Further clay excavation took place on the borders with Epsom Common at the turn of the 19th century.

In the 19th century the opening of the railway in Ashtead meant that cheap coal and building materials became easily available, with the result that pollarding declined. Changes in local land use from agriculture to residential development meant that grazing also declined.

Land drainage work to improve agriculture had reduced the meandering Rye Brook to little more than a drainage ditch by the 1940s.

Large areas of the south-facing slopes and the low land south of Rye Brook and Newton Wood were ploughed during and after the two World Wars for the war effort. By the late 1960s, with the requirements of the post-war period over, the ploughed areas had reverted to open coarse grassland and scrub developed.

Archaeology and historic environment
There are two Scheduled Monuments. The site of a Roman villa (County Monument Number 88) lies north-east of ‘The camp’ (County Monument Number 26). The latter is a large triangular earthwork enclosure about 125m by 180m in size and of unknown origin and age. There is also evidence of a Roman bath house, tile works, road and clay pits. Artifacts found on these sites may be seen in the Leatherhead and Guildford Museums.

There are five white metal coal posts on the site boundaries. These posts can be found marking the old boundary of Greater London. After the Great Fire of London in 1666, a tax to raise money for rebuilding was levied on wine and coal sold within the city boundaries.
Wood pasture
With its veteran trees, woodland, scrub, grassland and diversity of ecotones (transitional zones) between habitat types, Ashtead Common is a prime example of relic wood pasture – a historic landscape and important habitat. It is a valuable legacy of past land use for harvesting timber and wood and grazing livestock.

Lowland wood pasture is characterised by large and open grown-trees - sometimes pollards - and islands of scrub and woodland scattered through open grassland or heath. Decaying wood on the ground, or on mature, over-mature, ancient, dying or dead trees, is an important feature of relic wood pasture.

The south-east of England supports 70% of the wood pasture and parkland in the UK. Ashtead Common is a relic wood pasture recognised in Surrey as an area of historic landscape value.

Veteran trees
There are 2,303 ancient oak pollards on Ashtead Common, found in about 146 ha of the northern and western parts of the site in ancient broadleaved woodland, scrub, grassland and areas dominated by bracken.

Many are over 500 years old and the majority have hollowed trunks packed with decaying wood. These are showing early signs of retrenchment, the larger branches die off and the canopy forms lower down, so that eventually the tree becomes relatively squat. At least 56 pollards are over 1.5m in diameter.

Veteran trees such as these pollards, and a number of trees of other species, bear witness to past human activities and are an important part of the cultural heritage of the site.

Veteran trees are trees which, because of their great age, size or condition, are of exceptional value culturally, in the landscape, or for wildlife. They are a feature found in most of the City Corporation’s parks, gardens and open spaces.

The pollards on Ashtead Common were once harvested for fodder, firewood and timber – a testament to their value as a natural resource for local people.

A pollard is a tree that has been cut at or above head height, so that it sends up new branches. Pollarding has the effect of retarding vertical growth and prolonging the lifespan of the tree.
Scheduled Monuments & Other Archaeological Features

KEY:
- Scheduled monuments
- Area of archaeological importance
- Coal & Wine Tax posts
- Ancient Oak Pollards

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**Biodiversity**

Ashtead Common is a semi-natural environment. The vegetation and wildlife found here results from the physical features, climate, and past and current land use. It is best described as a ‘wooded common’ and is a mosaic of ancient woodland, veteran trees, scrub, open pasture, meadows and numerous wetland features.

In the course of more than a hundred years without active management as wood pasture, the open grassland of the site has been invaded by bracken and there has been a gradual development of scrub and secondary woodland. The oak pollards have matured into the magnificent veterans we see today.

The habitats described in this section are like pieces of a jigsaw. Together they provide the wildlife value that led to SSSI status. Wood pasture and parkland is a priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

**Woodland**

Ancient woodland is mainly found on the northern and western parts of the site and flourished due to the cessation of grazing about 200 years ago. Secondary woodland is found where the soil has been disturbed by ploughing or where tree cover has been cleared by fire. The majority of woodland is pedunculate oak with some silver birch. Holly, hazel and bramble form much of the understorey.

The woodland has a rich community of breeding birds including nuthatch, tree creeper, all three British woodpeckers, woodcock, sparrowhawk and tawny owl.

**Old growth and deadwood**

The decaying wood associated with veteran trees and old growth is a habitat of national importance. Additional decay is found both in standing deadwood (fire damaged trees and trees that have died naturally from shading) and fallen trees, logs and branches.

Old growth and deadwood support specialised and rare species of plants and animals, which rely on wood decay for one or more stages of their life cycles. Holes and hollows created by this process, mainly in the oak standards and coppice stools, provide homes for birds and bats.

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**Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP):**

A nation-wide scheme to conserve the variety of life, proposed at the 1992 biodiversity summit in Rio. As part of this government initiative, each Local Authority has drawn up a local BAP that identifies habitats and species under threat and contains plans to reverse their decline.

**Ancient woodland** has been in existence here since at least AD 1600 and is composed of native tree species.

**Secondary woodland** has grown up on land that has previously been cleared of trees. It lacks the overall diversity of undisturbed ancient woodland.

**Scrub** is an ecotone (a transition zone) between woodland and open grassland. It is dominated by shrubs and small trees and is important for invertebrates and breeding birds.
Scrub

While scrub forms a transition between woodland and open grassland it is an important habitat in its own right. Scrub on the southern slopes of the site is mainly blackthorn, hawthorn or sallow, while that on the ridge is predominantly young oak and birch, with stands of aspen across the upper slopes.

By the 1950s the abandonment of agriculture on the southern slopes, during and after the two World Wars, had led to the development of a mosaic of scrub and grassland. This helped lead to the site being designated as an SSSI in 1955 for, amongst many other things, its importance for breeding birds. An increase in the proportion of scrub compared to grassland then led to a decline in the condition of the habitat for breeding birds; in some areas, it also led to the establishment of secondary woodland.

Since 1995 the City Corporation has carried out a programme of scrub management. Grazing with cattle, initially grant-funded by English Nature (now Natural England), has helped to bring this area back into a favourable condition.

The scrub and grassland mosaic now supports nationally important invertebrates and breeding birds such as the lesser whitethroat, whitethroat and blackcap, while also carrying large populations of wintering thrushes and finches.

Much of the scrub on Ashtead Common is part of a scrub-grassland mosaic. This is our wood pasture of the future - ideal for the regeneration of young, open-grown oak trees, with an open pasture aspect and a rich source of nectar for the valuable invertebrate fauna.

Grassland

Grassland on the southern slopes lies on poorly drained disturbed ground and is dominated by tufted hair grass with cocksfoot, marsh fox-tail and rushes.

The central parts of Ashtead Common are also relatively open and reminiscent of the wood pasture of the past, containing some of the site’s population of ancient oak pollards. This grassland comprises poor swards dominated by false oat grass, common bent, Yorkshire fog, creeping soft grass, red fescue or a combination of two or more.

These drier areas have been kept open over the years since the fall in grazing, by numerous fires and the growth of bracken. Active management to reduce fires has left us today with a mixture of open grassland and bracken. Areas still dominated by bracken require further management to enhance biodiversity.

There is a distinct area of open grassland on the south side of the site, known as Woodfield. It is a flat meadow, waterlogged for much of the year. Prior to 1991 it was mown without removing the cuttings, creating a layer of partly decomposed organic material. It is now managed as a hay meadow and has a distinctive wet heath flora, supporting a population of greater yellow-rattle.
**Freshwater and wetland**

The areas of running freshwater (The Rye, seasonal streams, boundary and drainage ditches) support a variety of aquatic vegetation and fauna that is quite different from those of the ponds and their associated wetland. All add to the overall diversity of Ashtead Common.

Colonisation of Island Pond, on the northern edge of the site, has been slow because of its isolation. For the others, watercourses provide a natural corridor, linking wetland areas and helping sustain healthy and viable populations of aquatic wildlife; including dragonflies and damselflies, and breeding birds.

A mosaic of ponds and scrapes was created during the river restoration project alongside the Rye and these are being colonised by a variety of native species of plants and animals that will enhance the biodiversity of the site.

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**Important species**

The assemblages of invertebrates and birds, which led to the site’s designation as an SSSI, are of national importance; the assemblage of plants and fungi is of local and regional importance. There are also many individual species that are rare, notable or protected.

**Fungi, lichens & bryophytes**

Ashtead is a regionally Important Fungus Area, it holds significant populations of rare fungal species of European or UK Conservation Concern. There are records of 324 species, including the rare oak polypore. Seven species are of current concern based on recent BAP lists and Red Data List 2 (a list of rare, threatened or vulnerable species in the UK).

There are 71 recorded lichen species, 31 mosses and eight liverworts.

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**Vascular plants**

Over 400 species of non-woody plants have been recorded, including ten species of fern.

Over 50 species of trees and shrubs have been recorded.
**Invertebrates**

Ashtead Common is one of the most important invertebrate sites in the UK. There are more than 1,000 beetle species on the site, of which 130 are noted as being nationally rare.

Invertebrates associated with wood-decay are of note with six species of beetle and five species of fly listed as being of special interest under the SSSI designation.

Butterflies and moths records are equally impressive, including the purple emperor and the heart moth. Over 270 species have been recorded here since 1970, of which 16 are nationally notable or locally rare.

**Fish, amphibians and reptiles**

The Rye supports breeding populations of minnow and three-spined stickleback. Five species of amphibian are found in the network of ponds, streams and ditches, including the great crested newt. The site is also home to four of the six UK species of reptile, including the adder.

**Mammals**

The resident mammals are mainly common species but are an integral part of the site’s biodiversity and food chains.

In particular, roe deer are key browsers in wood pasture and help to keep young trees in check. Various bat species also visit the site and merit further study.

**Birds**

The assemblage of breeding birds found on the site contributed towards its designation as an SSSI and is of national importance. Records show sightings of 90 different bird species, of which over 40 species are known to breed regularly here.

**Undesirable species**

The following non-native plant species have been identified as being detrimental to the biodiversity of the site: goat’s-rue; goldenrod; greater periwinkle; Michaelmas daisy; snowberry; Norway maple; turkey oak.

In addition, excessive bracken poses a fire risk and reduces biodiversity; while common ragwort is a notifiable weed and a problem for grazing livestock and making hay.
The broader picture

Historically, Ashtead Common was part of a larger tract of wood pasture, woodland and common, remnants of which remain on neighbouring land. We therefore work with our neighbours and other bodies to explore and develop opportunities for enhancing the wider landscape and habitats.

For example, Ashtead Common is located in the Thames2Downs action area of the Green Arc for Surrey and South-West London and adjacent to the Green Grid Area known as Arcadian Thames. We will be working with others in these areas to improve access and enhance biodiversity.

The Site of Special Scientific Interest designation covers Ashtead Common and neighbouring Epsom Common, as well as the privately owned Newton Wood and other woodlands. We work closely with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, English Heritage and Natural England to ensure the two sites are managed in a complementary way to maintain their important features.

Ashtead Common lies within the Environment Agency catchment area for the River Mole. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and, as such, the relevant aspects policies of the Local Development Framework for Mole Valley District Council apply to its management. We also seek to deliver aims included in the targeting statements for the Joint Character Area known as the Thames Basin Lowlands (JCA114).

As part of our wider role, the City Corporation provides core funding to the Lower Mole Countryside Management Project see website: (www.countryside-management.org.uk).

Partnership working is, of course, reciprocal. For example, as part of a project to identify areas of opportunity for enhancing biodiversity across the county, Surrey Wildlife Trust has mapped protected sites and important habitats, helping to put Ashtead Common into a wider context.

Looking to the future, the City Corporation is committed to acquiring appropriate land next to the site to increase its sphere of protection, and to working with other organisations and landowners to benefit the wider environment.
What does the future hold?

The City Corporation is committed to safeguarding the long-term future of Ashtead Common. We will apply traditional methods of land management in a modern way to maintain the Common as a high quality and accessible open space for people to enjoy.

Visitors will experience a wooded common extensively grazed by cattle to maintain a variety of habitats supporting communities of plants and animals, some rare.

Ashtead Common will be known for its large population of ancient oak pollards, magnificently placed in the landscape; and the scrub grassland, its shelter and food a haven for many breeding birds, insects and small mammals.

People will enjoy a network of well maintained rights of way, on foot, horseback and bike. The balance between people and wildlife across the Common will be evident to all.

Local people will be actively involved in our work, to promote the historical and natural heritage of Ashtead Common. We will be engaging with and supporting our volunteers and members of the Ashtead Common Consultative Committee.

We will seek opportunities to ensure the Common continues to be recognised as part of a broader living landscape, making connections with neighbouring local authorities and other surrounding landowners.

Our rangers and volunteers will remain motivated and empowered to protect and conserve Ashtead Common for present and future generations. They will promote opportunities for all to be involved in caring for, understanding and enjoying their local open space.

The following sections of this plan outline the steps we will take to turn vision into reality.
Reporting incidents, accidents and dangerous occurrences

The main incidents affecting Ashtead Common include dogs not being kept under effective control, dog faeces, fires started accidentally or otherwise, motorcycles being ridden on site, and horse riders and cyclists straying off rights of way, causing erosion and coming into conflict with other users.

As part of our enforcement policy, the City Corporation uses a ‘community approach’ encouraging local people to act as the ‘eyes and ears’ of the organisation and reporting any potentially harmful activities to the rangers as soon as possible.

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Managing boundaries and entrances

The rangers regularly check the condition of the boundary ditches and banks, entrances and structures. We manage vegetation on the residential boundaries and highway verges of the site and remove any encroachments.

Residential properties bordering the site enter into a licence agreement with the City Corporation in respect of access via hand gates onto the open space.

Keeping the site cleaned and well-maintained

The rangers ensure any graffiti, vandalism, litter or waste dumped on the site is removed. We pick up litter from all high use areas twice each week and any fly-tipping is removed within 24 hours of being reported.

Patrolling and enforcing byelaws

Our uniformed rangers play a key role in protecting the site by patrolling, promoting responsible use, educating and advising visitors and, where necessary, enforcing byelaws. The byelaws prohibit or control certain activities, especially those which could damage the site, pose a risk to visitors or detract from their enjoyment of the site.

Patrols cover the whole site but take particular account of the areas next to the roads and houses, which are subject to higher use and therefore potentially greater misuse.

Aim 1: To protect boundaries and important features, in order to keep Ashtead Common as an open space for the future.

One of the most significant aspects of Ashtead Common is its ownership by the City Corporation, both in terms of the level of protection and continuity provided by the 1878 Act, and the commitment of resources to manage the open space.

Aims and Actions - Service
Installing and maintaining gates, fences and posts
We install structures at entrances and on our boundaries to prevent unauthorised vehicular access and to keep our livestock under control. Gates, stiles and squeeze gaps are installed to provide access through hedges and fences.

Controlling development
We have a responsibility to ensure that our open space is not adversely affected by development of the immediate environs or the wider environment.

We need to know about proposed developments or land sales close to Ashtead Common.

Issuing licence agreements
Wayleaves and easements are negotiated by the City Surveyor and managed to prevent misuse of the site. Organised activities and events are controlled with licences issued by the Superintendent.

Working with emergency services
We aim to continue, develop and maintain good working relationships with the local emergency services that we rely on to help protect the site.

We attend regular panel meetings of the Safer Neighbourhood Forum for Ashtead and meet local watches of the Surrey Fire & Rescue Service once a year.

Fire!!
Bracken and dry grass is a fire hazard to the trees, visitors and to the site as a whole. Fires encourage the spread of bracken, making the site even more vulnerable.

Fires started by people, whether negligently or maliciously, have had a significant impact on the site and the veteran trees; 40% of the pollards have been destroyed or badly damaged by fire.

We control the bracken by use of selective herbicides and bracken-rolling, in order to reduce the risk of fire. We maintain a network of rides to improve access and to help reduce the risk of fire.

We work with the Surrey Fire & Rescue Service to ensure that outbreaks of fire are dealt with more effectively.
Aim 2: To manage access, facilities and opportunities for recreation, so that people continue to enjoy Ashtead Common.

Ashtead Common is managed for the quiet enjoyment of members of the public. Organised events and activities are controlled by licence, in order to protect the site and maintain its appeal as a venue for informal countryside recreation.

Keeping rights of way open
Ashtead Common is managed as a public open space under the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878, which allows access on foot to all areas by all persons at all times. In addition, there are a number of public bridleways and permissive rights of way which may be used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

We inspect the public rights of way and keep them free of unnecessary obstructions, in accordance with local standards set by Surrey County Council.

Our annual programme of work to manage paths and rides includes mowing them throughout the growing season.

Constructing and maintaining surfaced tracks as access for all
Some rights of way have been surfaced to increase accessibility, particularly during winter months, as well as to reduce conflict between user groups. Members of the public are not allowed to use motor vehicles anywhere on the site except in designated areas.

We inspect the network of surfaced tracks and make good any damage through an annual programme of maintenance and resurfacing work.

Providing and maintaining facilities
Although there are no major recreational facilities, the City Corporation byelaw boards, bridges, surfaced tracks and roads all require regular maintenance. We work in partnership with the City Surveyor to inspect annually our buildings, structures and surfaces to keep these in good repair.

Installing and maintaining countryside furniture
There is also a wide range of more rural countryside furniture. We inspect way markers, fingerposts, notice-boards and benches and make safe or repair any damage.

Maintaining amenity grassland
We mow areas of grassland around the urban boundaries of the Common to maintain their amenity use by visitors.
Aim 3: To include local communities in all aspects of our work to promote greater knowledge and understanding of Ashtead Common.

Ashtead Common is managed by a team of rangers with the active involvement of the local community. It is important to us that the communities in Ashtead, Leatherhead and Epsom feel a sense of ownership, pride and responsibility towards the site. A key component of our ‘community approach’ is to gather, interpret and share information about the site and our activities to promote greater knowledge and understanding.

Consulting local committees, groups and associations

It would be impossible to manage the site effectively without input from others and we rely on consultation with a wide range of individuals and organizations.

Established in 1991, the Ashtead Common Consultative Committee meets twice a year and is composed of representatives from a range of local groups, organisations, authorities and other stakeholders. Wider public consultation is sought through the use of questionnaires, surveys, working groups, meetings, newsletters, guided walks and open days.

The Ashtead Common Volunteers and other volunteer groups are represented on the Consultative Committee and are consulted regularly about the work they do on the site.

We publish a detailed annual programme of activities and events for volunteers via the website and produce regular volunteer newsletters.

Liaising with statutory agencies, authorities and utility companies

We consult and work in partnership with English Heritage and Natural England to ensure that the management of Ashtead Common contributes to work going on within the wider environment.

We also work particularly closely with the local planning authorities, Surrey County Council, Mole Valley District Council and Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, which manage neighbouring parks and open spaces. We attend four meetings of the Epsom & Ashtead Commons SSSI Forum each year.

Wider consultation with other agencies and authorities is sought through forums such as Green Arc and Green Space.

Working with local countryside management projects

The Lower Mole Countryside Management Project (LMCMP) is part funded by the City Corporation. We support four meetings of their Officer and Member Steering Groups and provide opportunities for volunteers to carry out work on our site.
Gathering information by research and surveys
As an approved body managing an NNR, the City Corporation has a duty to encourage research at the site. Information collected so far includes maps, photographs, historical surveys and biological data. We deliver a programme of research and surveys linked to our aims.

Rangers and volunteers survey butterflies, birds, reptiles and fungi each year. Consultants and local experts carry out specialised ecological studies. Information about the broader landscape and habitats is gathered through aerial photography and vegetation surveys.

We respond favourably to requests to carry out research and surveys on Ashtead Common, usually within ten working days, and require information gathered to be shared.

Sharing information about the site
Information about wildlife, history, practical work, educational activities, recreational events and ways of becoming involved is interpreted and shared by:

- contributing articles for an annual newsletter, monthly web and email updates and other local publications;
- providing an annual programme of walks, talks, displays and events;
- creating leaflets, posters and notice-boards;
- day-to-day contact with the rangers.

Facilitating educational activities and school visits
The site is a valuable educational resource and our programme of educational activities attracts local families, primary and secondary schools and youth groups. The site is used on a regular basis for GCSE, A-level and university projects.

Attending seminars, conferences and forums
Seminars, conferences and forums offer a way of sharing and gaining expertise, whether within the Open Spaces Department or across the countryside industry.

Local and regional opportunities include the Surrey Habitat Action Plan Group for Wood Pasture & Parkland, Surrey Parks & Countryside Forum, the Ancient Tree Forum and the Grazing Animal Project.
Aim 4: To maintain important physical features and structures on our open space in order to preserve the integrity of Ashtead Common.

The underlying clay, and its drainage properties, is an important aspect of the site and its management. The Rye, freshwater ponds, scrapes, seasonal springs and the network of watercourses are an integral part of Ashtead Common. We aim to reduce damage caused to the clay soils and protect the historically important physical features. We must not carry out operations likely to damage the site without consent from Natural England, or carry out works on the historic environment without consent from English Heritage.

Maintaining ditches and banks
Some of these ditches and banks are the product of past human activity and, as such, are key components of the historic environment. We therefore keep them clear of woody and dense vegetation that threatens their integrity.

We inspect the other ditches and banks at the end of the growing season and, where appropriate, strim non-woody vegetation and remove trees and shrubs. We carry out an annual inspection of the flow-control structure across the Rye and mow its banks.

Creating and maintaining ponds and scrapes
In addition to the network of ponds and scrapes along the Rye there are opportunities to enhance biodiversity by creating seasonal ponds (which can dry out in summer) along seasonal streams and alleviate flooding by retaining surface water within the site.

We carry out work to the ponds and scrapes in accordance with the recommendations of the Pond Survey 2005 and current good practice.

Maintaining and restoring watercourses
In 2004 we restored sections of the river channel and corridor of the Rye. This improved the site in terms of its physical features, biodiversity, flood alleviation, recreational use and potential for education.

All the other water courses require monitoring, maintenance and management. We inspect drains and culverts regularly, and make safe and repair any damage. We inspect the Rye and drainage ditches after periods of heavy rainfall.

Survey and monitor geology, soils and water
To understand more about our site we need to undertake a geological survey of the Commons. A Soil Protection Review helps to protect the overlying and sometimes fragile soils in accordance with Cross Compliance. We will be assessing our impact on water supplies as part of our wider responsibility to protect natural resources.
Maintaining other historical features

The City Corporation works with English Heritage to develop a programme for conserving historical features other than the Scheduled Monuments, which include coal posts, a well, a boundary stone, tracks, ditches, banks, pits and other structures.

Looking after the archaeological and historic environment

We are developing heritage conservation plans for Scheduled Monuments, and the management of the archaeological features and historic environment on all of the City Commons.

Since 2005, an exciting partnership between the City Corporation, English Heritage and Surrey Archaeological Society has focused on the Roman Villa site. Surrey Archaeological Society is using past data to re-excavate parts of the villa site, aiming to fill in blanks in its history; create a photographic archive of all artefacts and reports about the work will eventually be available online. We aim to complete this project in 2014.

In 2010, Wessex Archaeology completed a survey of heritage features on all the City Commons. Out of a total of 40 assets recorded, 24 of these require control of woody vegetation but the majority required no action.

All historic features are vulnerable to damage by compaction from walkers, cyclists, horse riders and machinery. We visit the important features during our patrols and work with other agencies to ensure these features are not damaged or disturbed by illegal treasure hunters. It is not permitted to use a metal or mineral detector on the site.

Clearing harmful vegetation from scheduled monuments

The earthworks were cleared of most young trees between 2003 and 2006 to reduce the damage by roots and to improve appreciation of the site, under guidance from English Heritage and the County Archaeologist. In 2007, a similar clearance took place on the Roman Villa site.

Annual cutting and strimming maintains both Scheduled Monuments in a more open aspect, as favoured by English Heritage. This is encouraging a grassland sward more resistant to erosion by visitors.

Aims and Actions - Service
Surveying and monitoring veteran trees
A number of surveys of the ancient pollards have taken place over the years. In 1993 the ancient oak pollards on Ashtead Common were each tagged with a unique number and mapped for monitoring purposes using a GIS system.

In 2007/08 the Ashtead Common Volunteers ensured all the ancient oak pollards were revisited as many had lost their original tags. The most recent survey in 2009 looked at management priorities for conserving the trees.

Further research is needed to identify other veteran and notable trees on the site and to identify where our greatest generation gaps are located.

Any remedial work needs to go hand in hand with continued monitoring to see how the veteran trees respond and alter priorities and plans as necessary.

Wood Pasture – a historic landscape
In order to maintain and restore this historic landscape we manage veteran trees, woodland, scrub and grassland. Rangers, contractors and volunteers cut trees and shrubs to ensure a succession of these features and conserve a mosaic of habitats.

Approximately 60% of the veteran pollards are still alive; the rest are either dead or remnant stumps. Many need careful management if they are to survive. Dead and dying trees are retained in situ as homes for invertebrates and other wildlife.

Grazing keeps the grassland open, controlling bracken and new tree growth. A key aspect of our conservation work is to look at restoring the missing element of this traditional landscape – livestock.

Maintaining and restoring veteran trees
Veteran trees can become over-mature, with large heavy limbs that are vulnerable to breaking off the tree. Although trees in open ground may develop new growth around the break, shaded trees may die prematurely. Consequently we fell the younger trees nearby (halo-release) to reduce this shading.

Gradual crown reduction by experienced arboriculturalists can help prolong the lifespan of over-mature trees, decreasing the chance of them splitting apart and encouraging the natural retrenchment process.

We follow a programme of halo-release and crown reduction for the ancient oak pollards as recommended in the veteran tree survey 2009.

Rolling, cutting and/or grazing vegetation helps maintain open pasture and increases light reaching veteran trees and flowering shrubs. This also reduces the fire risk.
Aim 6: To improve habitats and the natural environment for wildlife so that we enhance biodiversity on Ashtead Common.

We aim to manage the site as a dynamic mosaic of habitats and, in particular, maintain and enhance the diversity of structure, age and composition of this traditionally managed landscape in accordance with our Environmental Stewardship agreement with Natural England.

Maintaining and restoring relic wood pasture

This important habitat comprises a mosaic of ancient oak pollards and other veteran trees, woodland, open grown trees and shrubs within open grass. Pollards and mature trees will be retained and areas of scrub managed to provide nest sites for birds and nectar for insects. In places younger trees and scrub will be cleared or pollarded to restore open pasture and allow grasses and wildflowers to flourish.

Grazing, the tool that created the wood pasture landscape, is the preferred way to manage grassland. This method maintains an open and diverse sward suitable for both invertebrates and breeding birds. Cattle have been grazing some areas of the wood pasture since 2010 and we will be increasing the area of wood pasture grazed during the life of this plan. We erect and maintain stock fencing to control livestock and incorporate gates and squeeze gaps on rights of way and other routes to allow access.

Controlling bracken is another important aspect of managing wood pasture reducing the risk of fire and increasing biodiversity by allowing light dependent species to flourish. Using herbicide promotes the natural regeneration of trees and woodland and is used to restore links between blocks of mature woodland. However, a mixture of rolling and mowing and collecting the bracken restores open areas of pasture and improves their diversity. Cattle also help to manage the bracken through their trampling effect.

Maintaining relic wood pasture as woodland

We manage our woodlands by ensuring that we maintain a diversity of age, species and structure in the canopy, under storey and herb layers, as well as carrying out vital work on and around the ancient oak pollards to prolong their lives for as long as possible. Our woodland management therefore follows a programme of coppicing, pollarding, felling and crown reductions as appropriate.
Coppicing is used to restore woodlands that were historically used to produce wood products. Today, we focus our work around veteran trees to let light in to them, and on the edges of rides and glades, as well as along hedgerows, to create an edge habitat between the open ride or pasture and the scrub or woodland habitat beyond.

Pollarding will be used to encourage new growth on trees, by cutting above the height of grazing livestock and browsing deer. Pollards will be created on a small scale, particularly in areas of scrub grassland, in the wood pasture and along the banks of the Rye.

Felling will be carried out as part of our work to halo release the ancient oak pollards, which over the years will place these important trees in glades, allowing light into the woodland floor and encouraging a diversity of shrub understorey to develop, providing nectar for invertebrates.

Crown reduction is a major part of our work on the ancient oak pollards, lessening the likelihood of them splitting apart and encouraging new secondary growth lower down. Crown reduction will also be carried out to ‘veteranise’ younger trees, letting light into the canopy without felling the tree. Some trees may be deliberately damaged by ‘coronet cuts’ and other techniques to create a deadwood habitat.

This will encourage early fungal infection and decay, creating niches for the plants and animals associated with the hollows in old trees.

Wherever possible we aim to create and maintain dead wood, by encouraging the important process of wood decay in our retained trees and woodland.

Dead wood
Dead wood from cut and fallen tree trunks and branches is, where possible, left intact or in large pieces close to the parent tree. This material is only moved for safety or access reasons. We try to keep all manner of dead wood on site to enhance biodiversity associated with the nature conservation status of the site.
Creating and maintaining woodland edge

Woodland edge, as well as round the edges of woodland, is found along all our rides and glades. A ride is an open tract of land through woodland and scrub, often along a path or wayleave (over or under a utility line). These transitional areas which encompass open grassland through scrub to woodland, support wildlife, improve access and create a transition from the open path or boundary to the shrubs and trees beyond. Well-maintained rides can also reduce the spread of fire.

The rides are cut periodically during the growing season, and glades at the end of the summer where necessary. Where possible, the cuttings are collected and deposited alongside the rides and glades to create nesting sites for snakes and lizards.

Maintaining and restoring successional areas and scrub

Scrub is an important feature of the site and is a key aspect of its SSSI status. It is found mainly on the southern slopes of the site and within the areas of relic wood pasture.

Ongoing management over the past ten years has restored a balance between scrub and grassland and maintaining scrub of a variety of ages and structure. However, if left unchecked, these areas will develop into secondary woodland.

We will restore and establish a diversity of scrub, in terms of its composition and structure, and maintain a variety of ages and forms by cutting trees and shrubs each year on rotation, aiming for a 50:50 mix of scrub and grassland. A combination of grazing cattle and mowing will maintain the restored areas of pasture. Scrub will remain a key component of our future wood pasture.

We will in effect be coppicing areas to create a ‘moving mosaic’ of trees, shrubs and grass habitats. This will encourage varying stages of openness, regrowth and maturity, to support assemblages of invertebrates and breeding birds across the whole site.

Open grown oak trees offer the best opportunity to develop veteran trees for the future. However, they are vulnerable to competition from faster growing trees and shrubs: halo-release will free them from competition and increase their chance of survival too.
Maintaining and restoring species-rich grassland

Woodfield, the only meadow grassland on the site, is mown annually and a crop of hay removed. Only part of the field is cut each year on a five-year rotation, to ensure it remains an open meadow with patches of tall vegetation for invertebrates and skylarks. Any trees or shrubs coming into the open grassland will be removed by rotational cutting and treatment with herbicide.

Cutting and laying hedgerows

We cut and lay trees and shrubs in scrub areas helping to create an “edge habitat” between mature scrub and open areas, or to screen stock fencing in grazed areas. ‘Dead hedges’ are made using cut woody material to help guide visitors.

A small area of secondary woodland near Forest Crescent is being managed and hedgelaying will be used to help shield residents from traffic noise.

Managing vegetation in freshwater and wetland habitats

The freshwater and wetland habitats will be managed to enhance biodiversity wherever possible. We will follow recommendations made in the 2005 pond survey and the 2009 river restoration survey.

Controlling undesirable species

We assess the threat to biodiversity caused by potentially undesirable species and, where necessary, we control invasive undesirable species by digging, pulling, cutting and applying selective herbicides.

A full list of the undesirable species is identified in the Farm Environment Plan and their control will be carried out in accordance with the prescriptions of the Natural England Environmental Stewardship agreement.
Aim 7: To care for people's health, safety and welfare thereby ensuring that Ashtead Common is a safe, secure and accessible place for all.

We aim to meet all the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, as well as all regulations and related policy and procedures set out by the City Corporation, in order to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our employees, volunteers and contractors and visitors to the site.

Implementing the annual Health & Safety Plan

We implement a Health & Safety Plan for the City Commons and any actions are included in our annual work programme.

Our site and facilities are inspected annually by safety auditors from other open spaces, and an annual plan to improve safety is prepared from their recommendations.

Identifying hazards and reducing risks

We ensure risk assessments and safe systems of work are completed and recorded before activities are undertaken on the site. We inspect tools, protective equipment and clothing used by our employees and volunteers.

Inspecting buildings, yards, roads and boards

We carry out monthly inspections of all buildings, yards, roads and byelaw boards. Any damage or defects are notified to the City Surveyor and their contractors complete the work.

Inspecting surfaces, facilities and countryside furniture

We undertake monthly inspections of all surfaced routes, paths, rides, gates, fences, bridges and other countryside furniture. Any maintenance and repair work is carried out by our rangers, volunteers or local contractors. We purchase any materials, and hire machinery and equipment needed to carry out the work.

Inspecting trees for hazards and managing risks

The Open Spaces Department has a Tree Risk Management Policy that balances risk reduction with the need to conserve notable trees and deadwood. Employees and contractors undertake annual tree inspections and any necessary remedial works.

Checking livestock and stock fencing

We have a duty of care to provide our animals with the ‘Five Freedoms’ enshrined in the Animal Welfare Act. We carry out daily checks of the livestock, gates and fencing (which includes electric fencing) and take action if needed.
Aim 8: To use our resources efficiently so that we continue delivering excellence and value on Ashtead Common.

We have a responsibility to ensure that we provide ‘best value’ in our open space management. The City Corporation consistently delivers excellence through its activities and we strive to maintain this standard at Ashtead Common.

Investing in people’s performance at work

There are three full-time rangers at Ashtead Common, supported by other staff. They are assisted by local and visiting volunteer groups and local contractors. All employees and volunteers are offered opportunities for learning and development, guided by annual reviews of individuals and teams.

Inspecting and servicing vehicles, machinery and equipment

The rangers and volunteers work out of the Ashtead Estate Office and Yard; where their vehicles, machinery, equipment and tools are also stored. They also have access to additional resources at the Merlewood Estate Office. These assets are inspected regularly and serviced by local contractors. We replace our vehicles, machinery and equipment in accordance with guidance from the Transport Improvement Group for the City Corporation.

Managing livestock husbandry and records

We use Sussex cattle to graze some areas of the Common. We have a legal duty to record treatments, births, deaths, sales and movements, in accordance with our Farm Plan and Cross Compliance.

Controlling local risk budgets and income

Our activities and resources at Ashtead Common are partly funded by the City Corporation from City’s Cash. In line with its charitable status, annual income is supplemented by grants and donations. The site receives income from the Single Payment Scheme and an Environmental Stewardship agreement, which provides funds for our conservation work. Legal agreements from licences, and easements and wayleaves for access and utility companies raise additional income. We also raise funds for specific key projects to supplement our income. We control expenditure of our budgets to deliver our work activities efficiently and sustainably.
Aim 9: To follow good practice thereby sustaining economic, environmental and social development on and around Ashtead Common.

We are committed to supporting the City Corporation in delivering sustainable development through its activities. We respect the limits of our planet’s resources and seek to improve the local environment and enhance biodiversity.

Preparing and reviewing business and management plans

Our integrated business and management plans strive to ensure that sustainable development is taken into account in all our activities, above and beyond our work to enhance biodiversity.

However, it is inevitable that active land management generates by-products that no longer offer commercial benefit and may incur a cost for disposal as waste. When dealing with these by-products, we follow the waste hierarchy of prevention, reduction, re-using, recycling, other recovery and finally disposal. Effective and innovative planning can reduce the resources we use.

For example, our contractors sell firewood and timber and harvest a hay crop from Woodfield. We chip wood onto paths and rides, and build wooden benches from felled timber. Some woody material and cut grass is piled on site to provide habitats for reptiles, birds and small mammals.

Preparing and reviewing project and contract specifications

As part of our planning, we prepare specifications to guide our work activities, seek consents and inform employees, volunteers and contractors.

We also work with others to help build a strong, stable and sustainable local economy. We apply the City Corporation’s purchasing directives to support local business. We aim to help these traders and contractors meet best practice.

We aim to use methods that do not harm important features, ensure Cross Compliance is achieved, enhance biodiversity and encourage sustainable development.

Providing volunteer opportunities to individuals and groups

Our ‘community approach’ is firmly based on working with local people to recognise and address issues affecting Ashtead, its environs and the wider built and natural environment. We offer opportunities for volunteers to be involved in practical conservation work, wildlife monitoring and looking after the livestock.

Providing apprenticeships & work experience

We respond favourably where possible to requests for work experience and provide training opportunities through work placements, internships and apprenticeships.
Applying for Green Flag and Green Heritage Awards

We not only manage our sites to conserve historic landscapes and improve biodiversity, but also aim to demonstrate environmental good practice in a variety of other ways. We have promoted our success in meeting the sustainability challenge, whilst providing a public service by successfully applying for Green Flag and Green Heritage Awards.

We are assessed against eight criteria – welcoming; safety and security; cleanliness and maintenance; sustainability; conservation and heritage; community involvement; marketing; and management plans.

Implementing the Sustainability Audit System

We work with colleagues in the Open Spaces Department to audit our performance with regard to sustainable development. As a result of this process we develop and implement an improvement plan for the department and our division.

Our current focus is to reduce our use of energy and water at our workplaces and we are looking at renewable sources of energy to help with achieving this.

This approach enables us to measure and monitor the success, or otherwise, of measures introduced to increase sustainability in every aspect of our operations.

Monitoring the condition of the open spaces

A key aspect of ensuring that we achieve our aims is by following a programme of monitoring.

Our plans and work activities will only be effective if we are aware of – and able to respond to – changes to the site and to the local and wider environment. We currently monitor a range of criteria and indicators of success to achieve this.

We are developing a programme of monitoring habitats, species and other criteria to help assess our performance in delivering a higher level of stewardship of the Common and safeguarding natural resources.
This section lists the work activities that will be carried out over a ten year programme to achieve the aims of this Local Plan.

The site is divided into 13 work compartments, shown on this map.

The tables on the following pages show the priority allocated to each activity in each year of the plan and where the work will be carried out. In addition, the Department Business Plan sets out key projects and performance indicators that are applicable to the management of Ashtead Common.
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**KEY:**
- **MT** = Management Team
- **OT** = Operational Team
- **PT** = Project Team
- **RT** = Resource Team

**PRIORITY**
1 - Essential (Legal Obligation)
2 - Highly Desirable (Best Practice)
3 - Desirable (Resource Dependent)

**HLS** = Part of City Commons Higher Level Stewardship.
Our living library for Ashtead Common includes:

**Service**
- Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878
- City of London Byelaws for Ashtead Common 1993
- Open Spaces Business Plan
- City Commons Divisional Plan
- Ashtead Common Site Management Plans 1991-2010

**Conservation**
- Natural Area Profile for the Thames Lowland Basin (JCA 114)
- River Restoration Project (Rye Brook) – various feasibility reports 2000
- Evaluation of the archaeological and historical landscape of Ashtead & Epsom Commons 1999
- Habitat Action Plan - Wood Pasture & Parkland in Surrey
- NVC Survey of Epsom & Ashtead Commons SSSI 2001
- NVC Survey of Woodfield SNCI 1999
- Nature of the City
- Ecological surveys – various including bats, birds, small mammals, veteran trees, ponds
- Species lists – various including invertebrates, birds, fungi & vascular plants

**Delivery**
- Open Spaces Annual Report
- City Commons Health and Safety Plan
- Ashtead Common Site Manual
- The Guide to Cross Compliance in England
- Surveys and Review of the Grazing Project