LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2020

OPEN SPACES DEPARTMENT

Kenley Common
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 Kenley Common. 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.

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

The City of London 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.

The Open Spaces Department

The City of London 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 for the use and enjoyment of the public and for the conservation of historic landscapes and wildlife.

The City Commons

Kenley Common is one of seven open spaces managed together as the City Commons. It lies mainly within the London Borough of Croydon with a small southern section in the Tandridge District in Surrey. The site lies west of Whyteleafe and south of Kenley.

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.

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.
This Local Plan outlines the important features and history of the site. It explains the work that will ensure Kenley Common continues to thrive as part of the local landscape, and a wider green infrastructure serving Surrey and South London.

Kenley Common is a 56 hectare (139 acre) area of downland (mainly chalk grassland), scrub and woodland lying within the London 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. Kenley Common remains part of a ‘green arc’ of parks, gardens and open spaces that links London with the wider countryside of Surrey.

The Common is part of a larger landscape unit, which includes: Kenley Airfield, Coulsdon Common, Kenley House and land owned by Croydon Council. Kenley Common includes part of the Second World War (WWII) airfield that is no longer required for military purposes. Here, a group of seven fighter pens are protected as a Scheduled Monument. Together with the present day Kenley Airfield (owned by the Ministry of Defence), and other land in private and public ownership, are features that make it exceptionally complete as a WWII fighter station and make it of national historic importance.

Part of Kenley Common is designated as a Site of Borough Importance for Nature Conservation by Croydon Council. They have also designated four Priority Archaeological Zones on the Common.

The site contains a diversity of habitats, including pockets of ancient woodland, old hedgerows and scrub, as well as an unusual variety of grassland types within a small area. These support a wide variety of species of plants and animals.

The City Corporation uses traditional methods such as coppicing, grazing and hay making 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 Kenley Common 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 its rights of way, enjoying the tranquility of this beautiful area. 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 challenge for the City Corporation is to mix this traditional management with 21st Century expertise and expectations, and to ensure that Kenley Common is more than a green island in the urban fringe.
Location
Kenley Common (grid reference TQ 330 585) is situated mainly within the London Borough of Croydon with a small southern area within the Tandridge District in the County of Surrey. The Common lies above the Caterham/Croydon valley, just west of the A22 (Godstone Road) and opposite the Riddlesdown and Whyteleafe Recreation Ground.

Ownership
The City Corporation bought the four Coulsdon Commons, including Kenley, in 1883 from the Lord of the Manor of Coulsdon, Edmund Byron.

During the First World War the Air Ministry requisitioned the whole Common (20.6 hectares) to form part of Kenley Aerodrome. After the war only the northern half was returned but 25 ha of adjacent agricultural land was compulsory purchased and given to the City in substitution for the land lost to the airfield, now owned by the Ministry of Defence.

In 1965 the City Corporation extended its holding when it bought land between Welcomes Road and Kenley Lane. Then in 1983 the City acquired land outside the perimeter track of the airfield that was no longer required for military purposes. Finally in 2004, a small parcel of land, (0.63 hectares) linking Kenley and Coulsdon Commons was returned from the MoD.

Adjoining areas of green space and agricultural land are owned by Croydon Council, Tandridge Council, developers and private landowners.

Site status
Kenley Common was acquired and designated Public Open Space under the Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act, 1878.

Kenley Common is not registered common land, becoming exempt in December 1966 under Section 11 of the Commons Registration Act 1965. Therefore there are no rights registered over the site. It lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

There is a Scheduled Monument on Kenley Common consisting of seven blast bays. Croydon Council has also designated four Priority Archaeological Zones on the Common, which cover all the blast bays, Western Front, Hilltop, Stumps Lane and most of Whyteleafe Bank.

Utility services
Three utility companies have statutory rights of access onto the site to repair and maintain their structures, apparatus and services.
Visitor appeal
Kenley Common is well used throughout the year, mostly by local residents but also visitors from further afield. They are attracted by its natural aspect (incongruously close to suburban Surrey and London), diverse wildlife and impressive views across South London.

Visitor access
The site is easily accessed by visitors, the majority of whom come from the surrounding residential areas. There are regular bus services from Croydon, Oxted and Redhill. With links up to London, Whyteleafe station is a short walk or bus ride away.

Visitor facilities
The site has no car parks, toilets or refreshment facilities although there is roadside parking in Hayes Lane. Information is available from wooden notice-boards on the site and from the Superintendent’s Office in Ashtead (open Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm).

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

Community involvement
Since 2003, a ‘community approach’ encourages local people to become involved in all aspects of the management of the site through active participation and consultation. The Community Involvement Strategy will give more substance to this statement when completed and adopted by the Superintendent. Many of our local visitors act as ‘eyes and ears’ on the site, reporting any problems to the rangers.

A local resource
Our volunteer team meets regularly and contributes to managing the site. They carry out practical tasks, as well as undertaking occasional wildlife surveys and helping with events throughout the year. The ‘Kenley Airfield Friends Group’ help in a variety of ways.

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

The majority of Kenley Common, in particular the land surrounding the airfield, lies on a plateau at about 170m above sea level. To the north and west of the airfield there are gentle slopes down into neighbouring valleys, whilst a steep scarp slope to the east provides excellent views across the Caterham Valley.

The essentially open plateau at the top of Kenley Common has had a huge impact on the site, making it suitable as an airfield from 1917 to the present day.

**Geology and soils**

Kenley Common lies on the chalk strata of the North Downs, which run westwards from Kent through Surrey to Hampshire. The proximity of chalk to the surface gives rise to infertile, calcareous, shallow, well-drained soils.

Where the chalk is overlain by a layer of clay-with-flints, the soils are of a brown earth type, ranging from loams to clay-loams, with a clay-enriched sub-soil. These soils are rather heavier and more fertile than those lying directly over chalk, in some instances they are of an acidic nature, even though the chalk is only a few feet below the surface.

An unusual feature of the Common is that one or two areas have a variety of soil types ranging from calcareous to neutral to acidic.

**Hydrology**

There is no running or (permanent) standing water on the site although Ordnance Survey maps from 1867 indicate that there were at least two ponds on the original Common. The chalk area of the Common is free draining and the level plateau, which is overlain by clay-with-flints, can become very wet in the winter.

Recently, surface water created by heavy rainfall has caused localised flooding. This was caused by failure of the original Second World War drains serving the runways and blast pens. A programme of drainage works continues to rectify these problems and will reduce the detrimental impact of standing water on the scheduled blast pens.
Archaeology and historic environment

The area surrounding Kenley Common contains many examples of early human settlements and activities although nothing has been found on the site. There is no evidence of Roman settlements, however a Roman coin of Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD) was found during construction work on Kenley Aerodrome in the 1920s. The Saxons built settlements in the area, giving rise to most of the local place-names. For example, leah is Old English for glade or clearing; hence Kenley means Coena’s glade.

Past land use

During Medieval times, Kenley Common and Riddlesdown formed part of the waste land of the Manor of Watendone. Commoners had legal rights to gather fuel, bedding and roofing, as well as rights to graze their own cattle and sheep. From the 1890s to 1971, the area of the original common near Golf Road was used as a golf course.

Land acquired by the MoD has been used for military purposes. The substitution land was previously farmland ploughed for crops, pasture and woodland.

However, after the Second World War, colonisation by trees and shrubs, particularly on steeper slopes, continued virtually unabated. In the 1960s the City Corporation bulldozed the scrub and established haymaking in these areas. Since the 1990s grazing has been gradually reintroduced as we clear scrub from the steepest slopes on Whyteleafe Bank, to restore open downland.

Kenley Airfield

The airfield is most well known for its connection to the two World Wars. Its importance today can be seen in the number of heritage features, which survive intact across both the site and the airfield.

Construction began in 1917 to provide more planes for the First World War. In 1919, after the signing of the peace treaty, the airfield was upgraded for the new Royal Air Force (RAF). As the RAF Headquarters of “B” Sector in No. 11 Group of fighter stations it played a key role in the Battle of Britain during the Second World War.

In December 1939 the original Hayes Lane was closed and a new road around the western edge of the airfield allowed the construction of concrete runways and the perimeter track we can see today. A series of dispersed blast bays were built on the perimeter – the remains of which are designated scheduled monuments by English Heritage.

Kenley remained an operational airfield for the RAF until 1978 and the core airfield remains in MOD ownership. RAF 615 Squadron (Volunteer Gliding School) use the site for gliding training, and a private gliding club also operates here. In 2000 a memorial was built in one of the blast pens to pay tribute to those based at Kenley during both World Wars.
Chalk downland

Kenley Common is a relic agricultural and pastoral landscape, strongly influenced by its use as marginal common land. The historic landscape of open downland with islands of scrub and small woods is characteristic of the North Downs and has a cultural significance.

The celebrated downland we see today owes its appearance to a combination of underlying chalk geology and human influence. Its original tree cover was cleared by prehistoric man and crops planted in some areas. Thin soils were quickly exhausted, so cultivation was abandoned and for thousands of years, the Downs were used for grazing.

Livestock kept the grass short and shepherds periodically cleared scrub (young trees and shrubs), maintaining open pasture. The growth of railways close to London meant that many Downs were developed for housing. The City Corporation’s ownership since 1883 prevented Kenley Common suffering the same fate.

Hedgerows

Old hedgerows are an important relic of the agricultural and pastoral landscape characteristic of the North Downs and are a particular feature of Kenley Common.

Bainbridge’s 1785 map of the manor and parish of Coulsdon clearly shows belts of trees and hedgerows along the boundaries of fields. In addition to providing shelter for livestock, these were harvested by coppicing trees and shrubs to provide fencing material, firewood and fodder for animals.

Veteran trees

There are notable trees on the site, represented mainly by boundary trees, mature coppice in belts of trees and hedgerows. Some of these trees may be veterans.

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 coppice stools on Kenley Common were once harvested for fodder, firewood and fencing materials. Such trees are an important part of our cultural heritage.

A coppice is a tree that has been cut at or just above ground level, so that it sends up new branches. Coppicing has the effect of retarding vertical growth and prolonging the lifespan of the tree.

Description - Cultural heritage
Biodiversity

Kenley Common is a semi-natural environment characteristic of the North Downs. The flora and fauna found here result from the physical features, climate, and past and current land use. It is a mosaic of chalk grassland, neutral pasture and scrub, with ancient and secondary woodland on its margins.

A visitor to Kenley Common a hundred years ago would have found open grassland, with scrub on its boundaries and small areas of coppice woodland. However over the past 80 years, with less intensive management and a decline in grazing, grassland was colonised by woody species and, in places, is now dense scrub or secondary woodland.

The habitats described below are like pieces of a jigsaw, albeit that their sum is greater than the individual parts in supporting the wildlife we value today. Chalk grassland is a priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The scrub has the potential to support assemblages of important species of bird.

Grassland

This site is of particular interest for its species-rich chalk, neutral and acid grasslands. It is unusual in the fact that all these types of grassland occur within a fairly small area. These habitats support a variety of warmth-loving flowers and their dependent insects, including some nationally scarce plants and those of restricted distribution in the County.

The number and abundance of species present varies between different blocks of grassland. Hilltop, now linked to Whyteleafe Bank, has the greatest area of chalk grassland and supports the highest number of species. Here are found patches of adder’s tongue, eyebright, dwarf thistle, autumn gentian and cowslip.

Although open grassland has been restored, significant areas of the Common are covered in scrub and secondary woodland. The important species-rich grassland remains vulnerable to colonisation by trees and shrubs, which must be controlled. There are opportunities to further enhance the value of all these habitats by active management.

Hedgerows

Hedgerows act as corridors linking adjacent areas of scrub and woodland and are attractive features in their own right. Since 1991 several hedges, comprising mainly native species such as hawthorn, buckthorn and dogwood, have been planted or created by retaining lines of scrub in cleared areas. Many follow the line of stock fences, and help reduce the visual impact of modern fences.
Old growth and deadwood

The decaying wood habitat associated with old growth in trees and woodland is of national importance. Additional decay is found both in standing deadwood (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 that rely on wood decay for one or more stages of their life cycles. Holes and hollows created by this process provide homes for birds and bats.

Description - Biological interest

**Scrub**

Whilst scrub forms a transition between open grass and woodland, it is an important habitat in its own right. It provides 'bed and breakfast' for communities of breeding and migrant birds found on the site. Thorny bushes and young trees provide ideal nesting habitats, while the variety of berries and seeds, together with the abundance of insects living in open grassland, offers a diverse food source throughout the year.

Scrub is a key component of woodland edges and hedgerows on the site, as the flowering shrubs provide an important nectar source for wildlife. The most valuable areas of scrub are those bordering the airfield and the ancient woods.

**Woodland**

Closed canopy broad-leaved woodland covers slightly more than one third of Kenley Common and some of it is ancient woodland, containing bluebell and wood anemone. However, most of the existing woods are actually quite recent, being secondary woodland only 70 to 80 years old.

There are a few individual scattered oak trees that are around 200 years old, and ash stools of this age or older. Of particular interest is a woodland bank which runs west-east along the top of Whyteleafe Bank and Hilltop – the woodland here is thought to be ancient.

The majority of the woodland canopy is pedunculate oak and ash. Hawthorn, holly, hazel and elder form much of the understorey of shrubs.

**Ancient woodland** has been in existence 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.
Important species
Over the years various groups of plants and animals have been studied by local enthusiasts. However, further work is needed to fully identify the variety of wildlife found on the site and to assess the conservation status of the species present.

**Fungi, lichens & bryophytes**
Fungi are an integral component of ecosystems. They play a key role in driving the process of wood decay and decomposition of organic matter. Occasional informal counts of fungi made on the site provide us with species lists.

Lichens and bryophytes have received little or no attention and consequently there is no data available for either of these groups.

**Vascular plants**
Botanical interest and recording has been very much confined to the wild flowering plants, with species lists dating from the late 1940s.

Some national rarities recorded include greater yellow-rattle, man orchid, and white mullein, while locally rare plants include green hellebore, pyramidal orchid, and bee orchid.

**Invertebrates**
Since 1990, butterfly transects have identified 30 different species on Kenley Common. Of particular note are sightings of purple emperor to the north of the site feeding on sallow in the woodland and mass numbers of marbled white on the chalk slopes.

Dragonflies and damselflies recorded include emperor and broad-bodied chaser. Grasshopper species include common field grasshopper, meadow grasshopper and common green grasshopper.

Crickets include four bush-cricket species - speckled bush-cricket, dark bush-cricket, oak bush-cricket and Roesel’s bush-cricket. A list of some 20 species of true bug was collated in 1993.

A total of four female glow-worm have been recorded on a single occasion and four species of soldier beetle (Cantharidae) have been recorded. More recently in 2008 a number of stag beetle larvae, a UK BAP priority species, were found in a dead and collapsing ash tree. The tree had to be removed for safety reasons, but the inhabited wood was relocated.
Molluscs

The slow-breeding Roman snail occurs on the site. This conspicuous mollusc is vulnerable to people collecting them for the restaurant trade and is becoming extinct.

The round-mouthed snail, which is more closely related to sea-living periwinkles than to other terrestrial snails, is found on the chalky soils here.

Fish, amphibians and reptiles

Whilst there is no standing water on site, the common frog and toad are found. Common lizard has also been recorded here.

Birds

A total of 53 species of bird have been recorded on the Common, of which 39 are known to breed. The site is of local importance for ‘downland’ birds, including skylark, linnet and bullfinch but is also host to various warblers, finches and buntings. There is opportunity to carry out a more detailed bird survey on the site during the life of this plan.

Mammals

The resident mammals are mainly common species that are an integral part of the biodiversity and food chains on the site. Although there are no recent records for rabbits, there are badger setts on the Common. Bats also frequent the site including noctule, long-eared, pipistrelle and daubenton’s.

Undesirable species

Japanese knotweed and snowberry have been identified as detrimental to the site’s biodiversity, while common ragwort is classified as a notifiable weed and a problem for grazing livestock and making hay.
The broader picture

Historically, Kenley Common was part of a larger tract of downland, common, farms and woodland, remnants of which remain on the boundaries. We therefore work with our neighbours and other bodies to explore and develop opportunities for enhancing the wider landscape and habitats. The neighbouring Coulsdon Common is also managed by the City Corporation.

For example, our open space is located within the Green Grid Area 7 known as London’s Downlands, in which we are working with others to improve access and enhance biodiversity. We also seek to deliver the aims of the targeting statement for the Joint Character Area known as North Downs.

Kenley Common is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. We work with Croydon Council, English Heritage and Natural England to ensure the site is managed in a way that maintains its important features.

Kenley Common is in the Environment Agency catchment area for the Bourne, which feeds the River Wandle. The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and, as such, relevant policies of the Local Development Framework for the London Borough of Croydon apply to its management.

As part of our wider role, the City Corporation provides core funding to the Downlands Countryside Management Project (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 country, Wildlife Trusts are mapping protected sites and important habitats. This work will help put Kenley 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 of London Corporation is committed to safeguarding the long-term future of Kenley 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 local people to enjoy.

Visitors will experience a wooded downland and farmland surrounding a relic WWII airfield grazed by cattle and sheep, and supporting communities of plants and animals.

Kenley Common will be known for its steep chalk slopes topped by woodlands and sun-lit meadows, with belts of trees, scrub, mature trees and hedgerows.

People will relax on downland awash with wildflowers and grasses, cut every year for hay but with refuges of long grass left on the edges for wildlife. Hedgerows planted along field boundaries, bedecked with blossom and berries, will provide shelter and food for birds and small mammals.

Local people will be actively involved in our work, to promote the historical and natural heritage of Kenley Common. We will seek opportunities to ensure the Common continues to be recognised as part of a broader living landscape.

Our rangers and volunteers remain motivated and empowered to protect and conserve Kenley Common for 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 local plan outline the steps we will take to turn vision into reality.
Aims and Actions

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

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

Patrolling and enforcing byelaws

Our uniformed rangers play a key role in protecting the site by carrying out frequent patrols, promoting responsible use, educating and advising visitors and, where necessary, enforcing byelaws. The byelaws prohibit or control certain activities, especially those that 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 roads, houses and the airfield, which are subject to higher use and therefore potentially greater misuse.

Reporting incidents, accidents and dangerous occurrences

The main incidents affecting the site include dogs not being kept under effective control, dog attacks on livestock, dog faeces and fly-tipping. 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 report any potentially harmful activities to the rangers as soon as possible.

We investigate and record all incidents, accidents and dangerous occurrences on the day of reporting, take action to resolve problems, and then share appropriate information with our local emergency services.

We provide an out-of-hours call service and take appropriate action on receiving emergency calls.

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.
There is often a perception amongst visitors, particularly with regard to women and children, that parks, gardens and open spaces are not safe places to visit. Generally the facts do not support the perception.

Since 2007 the City Corporation has committed resources to open up and improve entrances and the network of wooded paths on the site to address local concerns about personal safety. This work continues to enhance the visitor experience on the site.

Patrolling by the rangers is organised so that the site is walked regularly. They remove litter, check structures are safe, identify encroachments, and provide advice and support to visitors. They work in partnership with the local Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

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 Kenley Safer Neighbourhood Team, where incidents and crime prevention issues are discussed.

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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 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. Therefore we need to know about proposed developments or land sales close to Kenley Common.

We have a particular interest in the future use of Kenley Airfield and the potential sale and development of land currently owned by the MOD on and around the site. The significant increase in residential properties is placing a greater burden on our open spaces.

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Aim 2: To manage access, facilities and opportunities for recreation, so that people continue to enjoy Kenley Common.

Kenley Common is managed for the quiet enjoyment 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
The site 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 several public footpaths, a public bridleway and a number of permissive rides 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 Croydon Council.

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

Providing and maintaining facilities
Although there are no major recreational facilities, the City Corporation byelaw boards, surfaced track and pathways all require regular maintenance.

We work in partnership with the City Surveyor to inspect annually our structures and surfaces to keep these in good repair.

Constructing and maintaining surfaced tracks as access for all
Some rides are surfaced with woodchip to increase accessibility, particularly during winter months, as well as to reduce conflict between user groups. There is also a farmac footpath from Hayes Lane to the Kenley Tribute. We inspect these surfaced tracks and make good any damage through a programme of maintenance and resurfacing work.

Members of the public are not allowed to use motor vehicles anywhere on the site.

Maintaining amenity grassland
We mow areas of grassland around the Kenley Tribute and the southern point of the Common to maintain their amenity use by visitors.

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.
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Aim 3: To include local communities in all aspects of our work, thereby promoting greater knowledge and understanding of Kenley Common.

Kenley 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 Croydon, Kenley and Whyteleafe feel a sense of ownership, pride and responsibility towards the site. A key part of our ‘community approach’ is to gather, interpret and share information about the site and our activities.

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 organisations.

Established in 2004, the Consultative Committee meets twice a year and is composed of representatives from a range of 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 Kenley Common volunteers and other local volunteer groups are represented on the Consultative Committee and are consulted about the work they do on site.

The Kenley Airfield Friends Group was formed in April 2005 with the broad aims of helping educate local people about the site, engendering a sense of ownership and encouraging participation in site activities.

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

Working with local countryside management projects

The Downlands Countryside Management Project (DCMP) 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.

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 Kenley Common contributes to work going on within the wider environment.

We also work particularly closely with the local planning authorities, Croydon Council and Tandridge Council, which manage neighbouring parks and open spaces, and with the MoD who own Kenley Airfield.

Wider consultation with other agencies and authorities is sought through forums such as Green Grid and Green Space.
Gathering information by research and surveys

The City Corporation encourages research on 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.

Consultants and local experts undertake 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 Kenley 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 a twice-yearly newsletter, monthly 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.

In 2010 a heritage trail, consisting of six information boards about the history of the site, was installed around Kenley Common and two further boards are planned.

Facilitating educational activities and school visits

The site is a valuable educational resource, in relation to both its World War history and ecology and conservation. Our programme of educational activities attracts local families, primary and secondary schools and youth groups.

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 London and Croydon Habitat Action Plan Groups for Chalk Grassland, the London Parks & Green Spaces Forum, the Ancient Tree Forum and the Grazing Animal Project.
Aim 4: To maintain important physical features (geology, soils and water), so that we preserve natural resources on and around Kenley Common.

The underlying chalk, and its drainage properties, is an important aspect of the site and its management. We aim to reduce damage caused to the shallow chalk soils or potentially waterlogged clays and protect the historically important physical features. We must not carry out works on the historic environment without consent from English Heritage.

Maintaining ditches and banks
The main ditches and banks of interest on Kenley Common include the banks associated with the blast pens and heritage features associated with the World Wars. These are key components of the historic environment and we therefore keep them clear of woody and dense vegetation that threatens their integrity.

There are also a number of historic wood banks at the top of Whyteleafe Bank and Hilltop and we manage the trees and shrubs on these banks to maintain these historic landscape features. Recent survey by archaeological consultants has identified a number of additional physical features not previously recorded. More details will be available in the Heritage Conservation Plan.

Maintaining and restoring watercourses
Although there are no permanent watercourses, we are mindful of our wider responsibilities for water quality. We need to assess our impact on the physical environment, in particular the groundwater and nearby watercourses.

We inspect drains and culverts regularly and make safe and repair any damage. Recently we’ve begun a programme of works to restore blocked drains serving the airfield that have caused localised flooding and damage to the historic blast pens. Robotic cameras have identified where drains are blocked and we’ve dug out silted up soak aways.

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.
Aim 5: To safeguard the archaeological features and historic landscape, so that we conserve the cultural heritage of Kenley Common.

Kenley Common is recognised for its Battle of Britain airfield and historic landscape. The importance of these features was acknowledged when the blast pens were designated scheduled monuments and the airfield made a Conservation Area. We seek consent from English Heritage for any work we carry out on or around the scheduled monument.

Looking after the archaeological and historic environment

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

Since 2005, a partnership between the City Corporation and English Heritage has delivered remedial work (involving scrub removal from the blast pens). A recent survey by consultants has provided useful information to develop a 10-year work plan to continue this important programme of research, restoration and maintenance work. We are developing heritage conservation plans for managing the historic environment.

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 Scheduled Monuments are vulnerable to constant encroachment of trees and shrubs, which compromise the protection and appreciation of the historic landscape.

Annual cutting of the vegetation on and around blast pens maintains parts of the scheduled monument in a more open aspect with a grass covering, which is generally more resistant to erosion. However, some blast pens and other features still require scrub removal.

Maintaining other historical features

The City Corporation works with English Heritage to develop a programme for conserving historic features other than the Scheduled Monuments, which include the rifle range, the Kenley tribute, boundary markers, a small quarry, banks, hedgerows and belts of trees.

Surveying and monitoring veteran trees

Initial surveys have started identifying and mapping the mature boundary trees, old coppice stools and woodland areas. They will be assessed to identify if they are veteran trees and establish a programme of remedial work to maintain and restore them.

Maintaining and restoring veteran trees

We will fell younger trees around veterans to free them from excess shading in accordance with the programme. We will also undertake gradual crown reduction to reduce the likelihood of them splitting apart or dropping large, heavy limbs.
Aim 6: To improve habitats and the natural environment for wildlife, so that we enhance biodiversity on Kenley Common.

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

Maintaining and restoring species-rich grassland
Our flower-rich meadows are vulnerable to the encroachment of trees and shrubs that shade out sun-loving species of plants and animals. Generally, trees and shrubs will be removed by rotational cutting and treatment with herbicide to restore an open sward, which will be maintained by grazing or making hay.

However, some small patches of scrub will be retained to provide cover and food for wildlife. Holding back the encroachment of this scrub will be as important as maintaining different sward structures by grazing and mowing.

The main focus of this work will be maintaining and restoring the open grassland at the southern end of Whyteleafe Bank and at the northern end of Hilltop.

Cutting and laying hedgerows
There is a network of hedges on the site, most of which have been recently planted. It is our aim to maintain and restore these hedgerows because they create links between blocks of woodland and scrub and they screen stock fencing.

Maintaining and restoring successional areas and scrub
Scrub is concentrated on the edges of blocks of secondary woodland. A lack of management over past years has resulted in a fairly uniform habitat. The challenge is to bring it into a more favourable condition, whilst preventing young trees and shrubs from encroaching into the species-rich grassland habitat.

We will restore and establish a diversity of secondary woodland and scrub, in terms of its composition and structure, and maintain a variety of ages and forms by cutting trees and shrubs each year in rotation. 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.

Where appropriate, a combination of grazing livestock and mowing will maintain the open areas as pasture.
Maintaining and restoring woodland

We manage our woodlands by ensuring that we maintain a diversity of age, species and structure in the canopy, understorey and herb layers. To do this, we follow a programme of coppicing, pollarding and felling as appropriate.

We will create a network of rides and glades throughout the larger blocks of woodland that link together the current open areas to establish a more diverse woodland habitat and scrub edge for wildlife. A ride is an open tract of land through woodland or scrub, often over a path or wayleave (over or under a utility line), that provides access.

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

Coppicing is used to restore woods on the Common that were historically used to produce wood products. It is also used on the edges of rides and glades, and along the hedgerows, to create an edge habitat between a ride or pasture and the scrub or woodland habitat beyond.

Some mature trees and ancient woodland have ‘old growth’ rich in dead wood habitat. This features fungal growth and wood decay, creating niches for plants and animals associated with the hollows in old trees. Wherever possible, we aim to create and maintain old growth 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 as large pieces as possible close to the parent tree. This material is only moved for safety or access reasons. Where possible, we will encourage wood decay and keep all manner of dead wood on site to enhance biodiversity.

Controlling undesirable species

We assess the threat posed to biodiversity by potentially undesirable species. 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 Environmental Plan and their control will be carried out in accordance with the specifications of Natural England’s Environmental Stewardship agreement.
Aim 7: To care for people’s health, safety and welfare, thereby ensuring that Kenley 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 of London Corporation, in order to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our employees, volunteers, 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 the built environment on Kenley Common including the blast pens and the rifle range, as well as the 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 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 Kenley Common.
We have a responsibility to ensure that we provide ‘best value’ in our open space management. The City of London Corporation consistently delivers excellence through its activities, and we strive to maintain this standard at Kenley Common.

Investing in people’s performance at work
Kenley and Coulsdon Commons are managed by a team of three full-time rangers, with the support of other staff. They are assisted by volunteers 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 Merlewood Estate Office and Yard, where their vehicles, machinery, equipment and tools are also stored.

These assets are inspected regularly and serviced by local contractors. We replace 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 and a flock of Jacob sheep to graze our meadows and pastures. 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
The majority of our activities at Kenley Common are funded by the City Corporation from City’s Cash, at no cost to the local community. We control expenditure of our budgets to deliver our work activities efficiently and sustainably.

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 provide funds for our conservation work. We raise additional income from licences, easements and wayleaves.
Aims and Actions

Aim 9: To follow good practice thereby sustaining economic, environmental and social development, on and around Kenley Common.

We are committed to supporting the City of London 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.

Effective and innovative planning can reduce the resources we use. However, 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. For example, our contractors sell firewood and timber and harvest a hay crop from our fields. 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 the site, its environs, and the wider built and natural environment.

We offer opportunities for volunteers to get 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.
Aims and Actions

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 good practice in a variety of other ways.

We have promoted our success in meeting this challenge while providing a public service, by successfully applying for Green Flag Awards across all seven of our commons.

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, water and fuel at our work places 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 and reviewing our performance
A key aspect of ensuring that we achieve our aims and that our sites remain in a favourable condition is to follow 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 10-year programme to achieve the aims of this Local Plan.

The site is divided into thirteen 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 Kenley Common.
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<td>Keeping the site cleaned &amp; well-maintained</td>
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<td>Installing and maintaining gates, fences and posts</td>
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<td>Constructing &amp; maintaining surfaced tracks as access for all</td>
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1 We aim to carry out a specific survey on the Scheduled Monuments in this year. 2 We plan to increase the heritage trail in these two years.
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**Cultural Heritage**

| CH1 | Looking after the archaeological and historic environment |     | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | ALL        | OT   |
| CH2 | Clearing harmful vegetation from Scheduled Monuments      |     | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1,2,11     | OT   |
| CH3 | Maintaining other historical features                      |     | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3    | ALL        | OT   |
| CH4 | Surveying & monitoring veteran trees                       |     | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | ALL        | OT   |
| CH5 | Maintaining & restoring veteran trees                     |     | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,12 | OT   |

**Biological Interest**

| BI1 | Maintaining & restoring woodland                          | HLS | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1,3,4,5,6,8,9,12 | OT   |
| BI2 | Creating & maintaining rides & glades                     |     | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | ALL        | OT   |
| BI3 | Maintaining & restoring successional areas & scrub        | HLS | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1,3,4,5,6,8,9,11,12 | OT   |
| BI4 | Cutting trees & shrubs to maintain & restore grassland    | HLS | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 7,8,9,10,11,12 | OT   |
| BI5 | Mowing & removing cuttings to maintain grassland          |     | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 1,2,3,5,6,9,10 | OT   |
| BI6 | Grazing livestock to maintain grassland                    |     | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 5,7,8,9,10,12 | OT   |
| BI9 | Restoring, cutting & laying hedgerows                     |     | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 1,2,9,10,12 | OT   |
| BI11| Controlling undesirable species                            |     | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | ALL        | OT   |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|------|
| HS1 | Implementing the annual Health & Safety Plan                                   |     | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | OT          |      |
| HS2 | Identifying hazards & reducing risks                                          |     | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | ALL OT      |      |
| HS3 | Inspecting buildings, yards, roads & boards                                   |     | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | ALL OT      |      |
| HS4 | Inspecting surfaces, facilities & countryside furniture                       |     | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | ALL OT      |      |
| HS5 | Inspecting trees for hazards & managing risks                                 |     | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | ALL OT      |      |
| HS6 | Checking livestock & stock fencing                                            |     | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | ALL OT      |      |

**Resource Management**

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<td>Managing local risk budgets &amp; maximising income</td>
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**Sustainable Development**

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<td>SD3</td>
<td>Providing volunteer opportunities to individuals &amp; groups</td>
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**KEY: TEAM**

- **MT** = Management Team
- **OT** = Operational Team
- **PT** = Project Team
- **RT** = Resource Team

**PRIORITY**

- **1** = Essential (Legal Obligations)
- **2** = Highly Desirable (Best Practice)
- **3** = Desirable (Resource Dependent)

**HLS =** Part of City Commons Higher Level Stewardship.
Contact Details

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Fax: 0207 710 8630
Emergency: 01372 279488
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Website: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/kenleycommon

If you would like to receive this publication in your language, or in an alternative format such as Braille, large print or audio tape, please contact the Estate Office.

Our living library for Kenley Common includes:

Service
◆ Corporation of London (Open Spaces) Act 1878
◆ City of London Byelaws for Coulsdon Commons
◆ Open Spaces Business Plan
◆ City Commons Divisional Plan
◆ Kenley Common Site Management Plans 1990-2010

Conservation
◆ Natural Area Profile for the North Downs (JCA 119)
◆ Heritage Features Management Plan 2005-2010
◆ Habitat Action Plan – Chalk Grassland in Croydon
◆ NVC Survey of Kenley Common 2001 & 2002
◆ Nature of the City
◆ Ecological surveys – breeding birds and butterflies

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

Version 1: approved by committee (date of approval).