

Kingston's Housing Targets: The start of the end of nature and biodiversity in Kingston

Timeline of failure to protect the natural and historic environment in and around Kingston

Throughout time	No strategic environmental assessments for the Borough's planned growth have ever been carried out
2010	<p>The Screening Report for Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Kingston Core Strategy finds NO harm to Richmond Park and Wimbledon Common from planned development of 375 units a year. It reaches a similar conclusion for the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment (Box Hill) and the Thames Basin SPA</p> <p>The screening report is legally required to be based on scientific evidence and to show beyond reasonable doubt that no harm will be caused to protected species and their habitats. <i>It fails on both these counts¹</i>. The report also says that open space deficiencies in the Borough "are being addressed". This has not happened</p> <p>It is the 2010 HRA screening report which has been used to justify the building of 964 units a year from 2019 to 2041 (see below). The report can not be relevant to such a huge level of development that is also being proposed 10 years after it was written</p>
2016	<p>The Direction of Travel document identifies areas across Kingston that will see massive development. As a supplementary planning document to the then London Plan that extended massively the scope for growth in the Borough, the DoT should have been accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment. There was none</p> <p>Instead, the DoT report made the following statement: Environmental Implications: None</p>

¹ **Richmond Park** "Although this park experiences a high number of visitors, it is thought that the impact from trampling is not having a negative impact upon these habitats... It is considered that increased recreational pressure is unlikely to have a direct negative impact on this supporting habitat for the stag beetles."

Wimbledon Common: "It too experiences a high number of visitors and the trampling caused by walkers can cause a loss of vegetation. However it is thought that visitors are unlikely to be having a negative impact on these designated habitats as the majority of users are dog walkers."

Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment: "It is acknowledged that 6% of visitors to Box Hill within the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC come from this Borough (National Trust survey, 2004)... Significant visitor accommodation is not being proposed within Kingston Borough and it is therefore judged to not pose a significant problem for the Escarpment. It is also important to realise that open space deficiencies within the Borough are being addressed through Core Strategy policies but this does not mean that residents of the Borough are more likely to use local open space if their reason for visiting Box Hill and the SAC is to experience an environment that this borough could not hope to adequately provide. Therefore it is considered that the additional recreational pressure will be minimal and there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC"

Thames Basin SPA: "Only Ockham and Wisley Commons SSSI is relevant to this screening assessment as it is within the 10km buffer zone. Recreational pressure and human disturbance on vegetation and bird population have the potential for negative impacts on this European site. Previous studies have mixed evaluation results but some studies suggest there is a link between increased recreational use and decline in the population of Nightjars, between recreational activity and woodlark occupancy and between Dartford Warbler breeding parameters and levels of human disturbance. However, it is unlikely that the Core Strategy will have a significant impact upon Ockham and Wisley Common because of the distance of this European site from the Borough boundary which is 7.5km from the southwest boundary. If any new housing does occur in the south of the Borough it will be situated at a reasonable distance away from this common."

2017	Kingston Council completes scenario documents in which it specifies the location, scope and density of development that can take place on large sites across the Borough. No environmental assessment accompanies this work. The council refuses to publish this information until June 2019
2017	The methodology by which each Borough's housing targets are calculated normally contains environmental considerations that act as constraints on development targets. The 2017 methodology removed all environmental considerations so that the effect on the environment of housing targets being set across London was never considered
2017	Natural England was removed as a consultee on the methodology for determining housing targets for each Borough across London
2017	Information from the scenario documents is used to establish massive housing and employment targets for Kingston for the new London Plan
2019	The <i>out-of-date 2010 HRA assessment</i> has been used to justify "no harm" to protected habitats and species from a two and a half times increase in Kingston's minimum annual housing targets to 964 units. This figure excludes massive further increases in the "opportunity area" across Kingston and further increases in units that will accompany the provision of more buses in the Borough or if CrossRail 2 comes to Kingston. The latter alone brings a whopping 16,309 residential units on top of the base target
2019	The new London Plan also brings massive building for jobs in Kingston eg Unilever's massive global HQ at the Eden Campus, which at 22 storeys will tower over the whole of Kingston, including its Grade I listed All Saint's Church