



FOXHOLES WOOD

GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN, 2027 - 2037

BRIEFING DOCUMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

A new ten-year Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) is being produced for the Foxholes Wood. This briefing document provides an overview of how the GAP will be produced and sets out how stakeholders can contribute to shaping the plan.

GAPs are essentially map-based management plans that provide focus and direction for the running and improvement of open spaces. They provide a clear, logical process to determine the activities that should take place over a stated period of time to achieve the objectives for the site.

The GAP is being produced by the Countryside Management Service (CMS), part of Hertfordshire County Council's Countryside and Rights of Way Service, on behalf of and in partnership with East Herts Council. The completed document will inform the management actions to be undertaken over the next ten years, commencing in April 2027.

Engaging communities is integral to the production of GAPs, to ensure that stakeholders are fully aware of and able to interact with the plan production process. This briefing document initiates and supports this community engagement.

The engagement period will run from 25th September to 16th October 2026. A further engagement period in January 2027 will provide an opportunity to assess the draft version of the GAP. Please use the contact details in Section 6 to comment on the aspirations for the site.

This document has been broken down into easy to read sections:

Section 2 provides an overview of the site and location map.

Section 3 reviews recent management of the site.

Section 4 contains the core objectives for the Foxholes Wood GAP.

Section 5 summarises the public engagement methodology, setting out how and when stakeholders can contribute to the plan.

2. BACKGROUND

Foxholes Woodland is a 6.2 hectare open space owned and managed by East Herts Council, surrounding Foxholes Estate in Hertford.

Foxholes Woodland has a mixture of habitats including woodland, grassland and open spaces with a flood alleviation area on the western edge. The woodland has distinct areas consisting of older woodland with large oaks, hazel coppice with an understorey of honeysuckle and bluebells in contrast to areas of younger plantation mainly ash, silver birch which are fast growing and were planted as a shelter belt along the A414 boundary. Two play areas sit within the site, they are managed separately by East Herts Council and will not be included as part of this plan.

Foxholes Wood

Greenspace Action Plan 2027-37

Location Plan

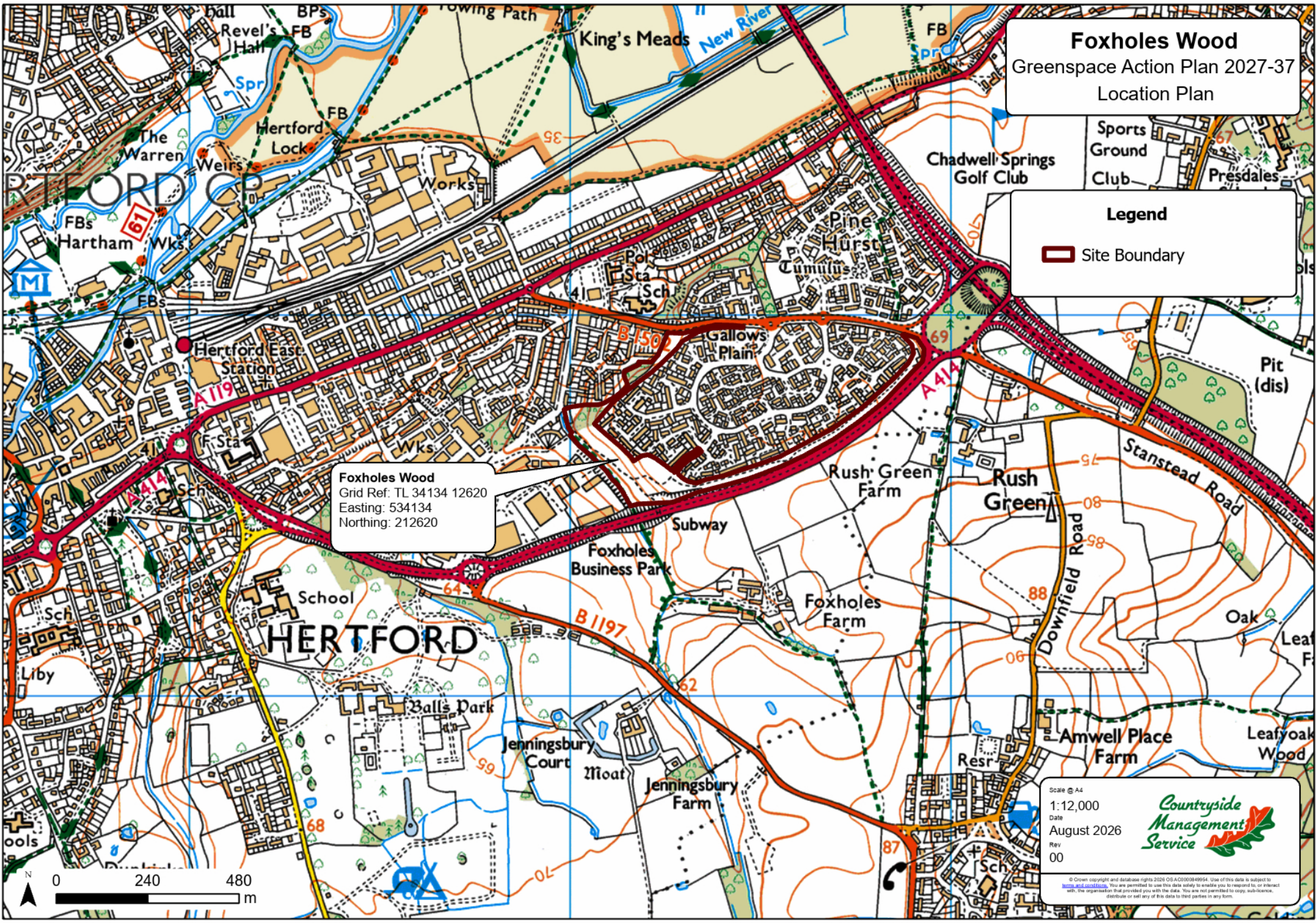
Legend

 Site Boundary

Foxholes Wood
Grid Ref: TL 34134 12620
Easting: 534134
Northing: 212620

Scale @ A4
1:12,000
Date
August 2026
Rev
00

Countryside Management Service 



3. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

The site is currently managed by East Herts Council through a ground's maintenance regime, with no current management plan in place. The last plan was produced by the Countryside Management Service from 2012-2017. The following actions were included as part of the previous plan:

- A new circular walking route was created making access around the woodland easier for visitors
- Wildflower seeding on some grassland areas and conservation cut introduced
- Pathway surfacing and infrastructure repairs
- Additional entrances to the route created with stepped access
- Improved interpretation and signage
- Selective and small-scale thinning of the mature woodland and newer plantation areas

4. GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN (GAP) 2027-2037

The Foxholes Wood GAP 2027-37 will be a simple, easy to read plan for use by officers of East Herts Council and members of the public and will act as a guide to the work of volunteers. The plan will be largely map based, with sequential, annual management maps to show the actions planned for each year. The resulting change will be represented on the map for the following year. The document will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

The plan will be costed and potential funding sources identified. Once the final GAP is agreed, external funding will be sought to enable some parts of the plan to be delivered, with regular maintenance carried out as part of the grounds maintenance contract. All actions within the plan are aspirational, are not guaranteed to take place within the specified year and may be subject to successfully obtaining external funding

The aim and objectives of the GAP will be as follows:

Aims

Objectives

- A. A welcoming place- To provide a welcoming green space for the enjoyment of the local community*
 - A1 Improve access into and around the site, ensuring pathways and entrances are kept clear and open and sight lines kept clear
 - A2 Update and improve signage around the site
 - A3 Improve the visitor experience and enhance opportunities for informing and educating

- B. Healthy, Safe and Secure- To provide and maintain clear and safe public access to Foxholes Wood*
 - B1 Carry out tree risk surveys in line with EHC tree strategy and reactive tree works to address safety issues
 - B2 Respond promptly to reports of misuse of the site
 - B3 Ensure all routes are safe for all users

- C. Well Maintained and Clean- To ensure that all aspects of Foxholes Wood are kept clean and well maintained*

- C1 Manage and maintain paths, access infrastructure and signage
- C2 Remove fly-tipping, undertake regular litter picking, empty dog bins and carry out small scale vegetation management along access routes
- C3 Ensure a good standard of general site maintenance is upheld through grounds maintenance operations

D. Environmental Management- To ensure all aspects of site management are undertaken with sustainability as a guiding principle

- D1 Ensure all site activities adhere to relevant EHC policies and strategies, including all work undertaken by contractors
- D2 Secure external funding to ensure the viability of capital works and ensure ongoing maintenance costs are financially sustainable
- D3 Ensure impacts of climate change are considered in management decisions
- D4 Carry out management according to environmental best practice, including a presumption against the use of herbicide
- D5 Monitor results of delivery to evaluate the success of management activities

E. Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage- To conserve and enhance the important wildlife, landscape, and heritage features of Foxholes Wood

- E1 Manage sown wildflower areas to promote wildflower diversity through annual cut and collect of the meadow. Introduce further wildflower areas to be managed in this way
- E2 Manage current amenity cut grassland as enhanced amenity grassland to improve diversity
- E3 Implement a programme of woodland management to manage younger plantation trees through thinning and scallop creation
- E4 Implement a programme of management to support older woodland areas, ensuring large oaks are protected through thinning and traditional hazel coppice

- E5 Manage invasive species along walking routes, particularly snowberry

F. Community Involvement- To ensure engagement and involvement of local communities

- F1 Support volunteer activity and ensure all involved operate towards achievement of the GAP
- F2 Support and encourage the local community to become further involved in the management of Foxholes Wood in a structured and supported way

G. Marketing and Communication- To promote awareness and interest in Foxholes Wood

- G1 Promote the site through EHC and CMS websites and social media.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PLAN PRODUCTION PROCESS

Effective community engagement is at the centre of successful management plans. The value of a GAP is maximised when it incorporates and balances the aspirations of stakeholders and interest groups.

In order to provide all interested stakeholders and groups with the opportunity to feed into the production of the new GAP, we have adopted a structured two-stage approach to community engagement.

- For the first stage (this briefing document), stakeholders and site users will be invited to make comment on the core aspirations in Section 4; it is hoped that any further aspirations and/or issues will be identified through this information gathering process. This first stage of community engagement will run between **25th September and 16th October 2026**.
- For the second stage, stakeholders and site users will be invited to read through and make comment on the draft GAP, which will include the detailed proposals and actions. This stage is intended to run in **January 2027**.

Following the second stage exercise, the final document will be produced, published and the actions will commence.

Please be aware that we will not respond individually to comments received through the public engagements; instead, we will produce a summary of comments, noting any amendments made to the plan as a result. This engagement response document will be published online alongside the briefing document, draft plan and final plan. We will retain contact details only for the purpose of keeping respondents informed about the plan development process.

5.1 Greenspace Action Plan production process

1. Production of briefing document and outline proposals.
2. Stakeholder engagement on briefing document. Engagement will run from 25th September to 16th October 2026.
3. Production of draft GAP.
4. Stakeholder engagement on draft GAP. Engagement will run in January 2027.
5. Production of final GAP.
6. Publicity and promotion.

5.2 Stakeholders

- Hertfordshire County Council portfolio holder and local member
- East Herts Council portfolio holder and local members
- Relevant Hertfordshire County Council officers
- Relevant East Herts Council officers
- Parish Council
- Hertfordshire Ecology
- Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record
- Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Kings Mead Residents Association
- Kings Mead Neighbourhood Plan
- Local Community

6. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Thank you for taking the time to read this document. We are keen to receive feedback from you on our proposals for the Foxholes Wood Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) 2027-2037.

Please return your comments using the contact details below by **16th October 2026** at the latest.

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