

Studio Way Woodland Trail & Potterswood Park

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014-2019

Briefing Document

October 2013



1 INTRODUCTION

Countryside Management Service (CMS) working in partnership with Hertsmere Borough Council (HBC) are developing a new 5 year Management Plan for Studio Way Woodland Trail & Potterswood Park (see map on page 6), starting in 2014 and running through to 2019. As the owner and manager of Studio Way Woodland Trail & Potterswood Park, HBC are responsible for ensuring that the site is managed as effectively as possible for the safety and benefit of people and wildlife.

Management Plans are invaluable documents that give focus and direction to the running and improvement of open spaces. They provide a clear process to determine the activities that should take place on a site over a certain period of time in order to meet the agreed objectives.

In some cases Management Plans are written up to the point of final draft prior to the local community being engaged; this not only means that people are faced with a significant document to read in depth for the first time, but new information can emerge through the process that might have been identified previously and then becomes hard to integrate.

It is our intention with the Studio Way Woodland Trail & Potterswood Park Management Plan to hold discussions early in the process to ensure that people are fully aware of what we are intending and are provided with ample opportunity to be involved in the process.

HBC would like to use the opportunity to inform people about some actions that will have to take place on-site, such as the ongoing removal of poplar trees and discuss with people other potential future actions, such as new interpretation for the woodland.

This document provides some background information on the site and previous management. It then goes on to outline some of the objectives and actions for the new Management Plan and also summarises the engagement process that forms part of the Management Plan production, specifying how and when people will be involved.

2 BACKGROUND

The landscape of Studio Way Woodland Trail & Potterswood Park has developed over many years, yet some of the original field boundary hedges, woodland and veteran Oak trees still survive on the site.

In the 1950's, when the local area was used as a filming location large numbers of Poplar trees were planted and now dominate some of the woodland areas. With the subsequent construction of neighbouring housing, work has had to be carried out in recent years to remove some of the large Poplars, particularly those close to people's houses.

This work has not always been welcomed by some local residents; however the work is essential to prevent damage to neighbouring properties from subsidence and to reduce the risk from falling trees and branches.

As a result, in the last ten years work has been carried out to replant parts of the site with a wider variety of native trees and a woodland trail has previously been established through the site. Potterswood Park has also recently had a facelift, with two football goal units, a challenging multi-play area and basket swing being installed.

There is a network of footpaths through the site; some are tarmaced and owned & maintained by Hertfordshire County Council, and others are less formal, with a grassed surface and are owned and maintained by Hertsmere Borough Council.

A number of the paths are in poor condition with an uneven and / or muddy surface and others have trees overhanging them making them difficult to use. Many of the existing access structures on the site, such as bollards, chicanes, bins and benches have been there for many years and have become damaged and/or badly weathered over time.

3 MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014-19

The new Studio Way Woodland Trail & Potterswood Park Management Plan will lead on from the positive and successful work previously carried out on the site. It will be a simple, easy to read plan for use by Council officers, members of the public, and to guide work of volunteers.

The plan will be largely map based, with annual management maps to show the actions planned for each year with the resulting change represented on the map for the following year. The document will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

The new management plan will; help make decisions and agree how Studio Way Woodland Trail & Potterswood Park is managed; identify works that have to be carried out for health and safety or access reasons; and enable funding and resources to be allocated for improvements.

A series of key objectives are being developed to achieve the aim of managing the site for the benefit of people and wildlife. From these key objectives, specific actions will be identified to achieve the aim.

Key objectives for the new plan

- Make Studio Way Woodland Trail & Potterswood Park a welcoming place for visitors
- Conserve the biodiversity and heritage sustainably and over the long term
- Involve the community in the development of Studio Way Woodland Trail & Potterswood Park
- Promote Studio Way to new users through a variety of means
- Maintain Studio Way as a clean, well maintained, safe and secure Open Space

Outline management proposals to achieve the objectives

- Install new welcome signs and make visual & access improvements to the entrance points.
- Restore old hedgerows across the site through hedgelaying, coppicing and replanting.
- Thin out trees in the mature woodland areas to encourage the development of good quality trees and woodland in the long term.

- Gradually remove the majority of existing Poplar trees over the next ten years to prevent damage to neighbouring properties. Replacement trees will be native species and natural regeneration promoted in cleared areas to encourage the development of good woodland in the long term.
- Create a new circular trail through the site with interpretation and leaflets, which;
 - celebrates the area's historical links with the film industry;
 - hi-lights Studio Way Woodland Trail & Potterswood Park significant wildlife & landscape value;
 - promotes links with neighbouring parks, open spaces and the wider countryside.
- Remove old rabbit fencing and replace old bollards, chicanes, bins and other structures.
- Repair and resurface paths and cut back overhanging vegetation throughout Studio Way Woodland Trail & Potterswood Park.
- Apply for external / charitable funding to support site improvements.

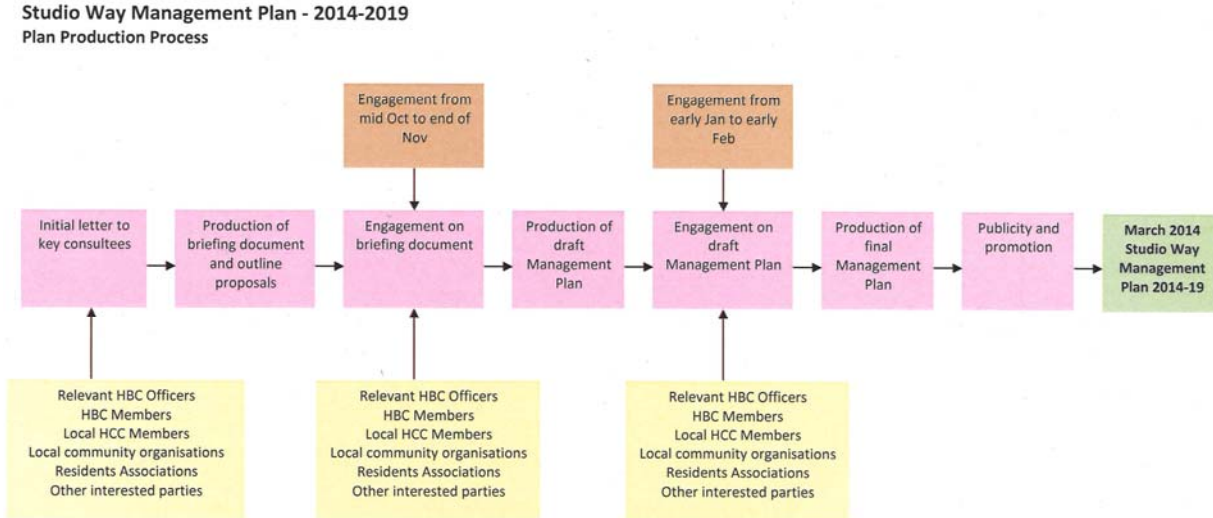
4 Community engagement

Effective community engagement is at the centre of a successful Management Plan. Their particular value as documents comes from balancing the thoughts and aspirations of users and interested groups throughout the writing process.

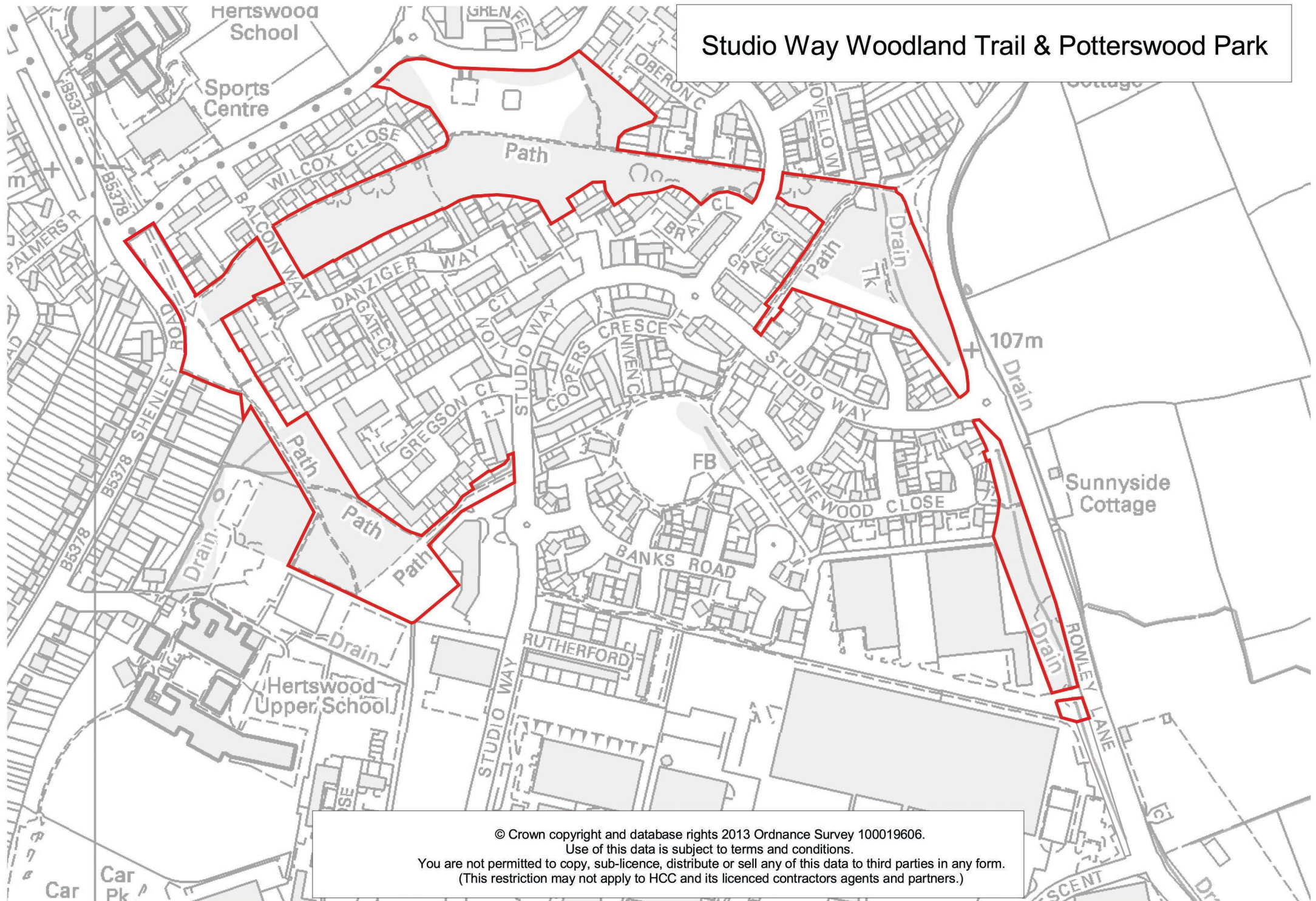
In order to enable all stakeholders and interested groups the opportunity to feed into the production of the new Management Plan, we have adopted a two-stage approach to engagement.

For the first stage, people will be invited to make comment on the key objectives and outline actions that we are putting forward as part of this briefing document; it is hoped that any further objectives and/or issues will be addressed through this information gathering process. To support this stage, we will be hosting engagement sessions for any users or interested groups that may wish to discuss the proposals or a particular aspect in more detail.

For the second stage, people will be invited to read through and make comment on the draft Management Plan. Following this exercise, the final document will be produced and published. The following diagram shows the Management Plan production process which was issued to all consultees at the start of this project:



Studio Way Woodland Trail & Potterswood Park



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