



Epping Forest Centre Joint Consultative Committee

Date: MONDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2014
Time: 11:30am
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM - 2ND FLOOR WEST WING, GUILDHALL

Members: Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman)
George Abrahams (Deputy Chairman)
Verderer Peter Adams
Geoff Brown, FSC Honorary Treasurer
Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Verderer Richard Morris
Anthony Thomas, FSC Hon Vice President

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Lunch will be served in the Guildhall Club at the rising of the Committee

John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

Public Agenda

1. APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

3. MINUTES

To agree the public minutes of the previous meeting.

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 8)

4. HEATING ARRANGEMENTS AT EPPING FOREST FIELD STUDIES CENTRE

Report of the Superintendent of Epping Forest.

For Information
(Pages 9 - 12)

5. EPPING FOREST FIELD CENTRE PROGRESS AND BACKGROUND TO PLANNING

Report of the Head of Epping Forest Field Centre.

For Information
(Pages 13 - 22)

6. EPPING FOREST FIELD CENTRE PLAN AND FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2015

Report of the Head of Epping Forest Field Centre.

For Decision
(Pages 23 - 30)

7. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

EPPING FOREST CENTRE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 9 October 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest Centre Joint Consultative Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 11.30am

Present

Members:

Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman)	Geoff Brown, FSC Honorary Treasurer
Deputy Stanley Ginsburg (Deputy Chairman)	Roger Chapman, FSC Honorary Vice President
Verderer Peter Adams	Deputy Catherine McGuinness

Officers:

Rakesh Hira	- Town Clerk's Department
Alison Elam	- Group Accountant, Chamberlain's Department
Paul Thomson	- Superintendent, Epping Forest
Steve Bunce	- Head of Centre, Epping Forest
Antony Fenwick	- Visitor Services Manager, Epping Forest
Mark Bolland	- FSC Director of Operations

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Verderer Richard Morris, Anthony Thomas, Sue Ireland and Robert Lucas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The public minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

FSC Central Costs

The Chamberlain explained that a discussion between the FSC's Director of Finance and the Chamberlain's Department in relation to the FSC central costs was still due to take place and a meeting was in the process of being arranged.

Epping Forest Visitor Services

A report would be submitted to the Epping Forest & Commons Committee in November in relation to the tender process for the existing visitor centre building.

Fund Raising Pack

It was noted that the Fundraising Strategy would consider the production of the fund raising pack for individual schools.

Education Strategy

It was noted that a report was due to be considered by the Policy & Resources Committee on the Education Strategy which would take the education services provided by Epping Forest.

4. HEAD OF CENTRE'S REPORT ON PROGRESS IN 2013

A report of the Head of Centre informed the Committee on the progress at the Epping Forest Field Centre in 2013, in advance of the more detailed report on 2013, which will come to the Committee in the spring of 2014.

The Head of Centre reported that the services at the Centre had been operating well and were on target to meet the Key Performance Indicators. The deficit which had been predicted had been turned around and the Centre was working in partnership with individual Schools for delivering education services.

The Head of Centre drew attention to the significant improvements that had been made to the toilets and bathrooms at the Centre. He indicated that this had been, and would be, greatly appreciated by him and by staff and visitors. He also welcomed the installation of solar light tubes, light sensors and press taps that will make energy savings and reduce CO2 outputs.

In response to a question by the Chairman on the 22,000 learner experiences taking place at the Centre, the Head of Centre explained that a 'learner experience' was defined as an individual coming to the Centre for more than two hours for a taught course.

A discussion took place on the 'Lessons from Nature Project' and it was noted that a report would be submitted to the next meeting on the evaluation of the project and whether the Centre matched the EU's aspirations. It was noted that the project had been externally recognised by the Chief Executive of the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom and by AQA.

In response to a question by the Deputy Chairman, it was noted that individual Schools could visit the Forest without having an education service, if the School wished to do so, however the learning experience for students would not be as effective as that provided by the learning facilitators at the Centre.

5. HEAD OF CENTRE'S REPORT ON THE CENTRE'S 2014 PLAN AND FINANCIAL ESTIMATES

A report of the Head of Centre sought the Committee's approval of the draft 2014 Action Plan with 2014 financial estimates. The Plan was intended to support the visions of the Field Studies Centre (FSC), the City of London and to deliver the City's environmental education service in Epping Forest.

The aims for 2014 include the following:

- Responding imaginatively to the City of London's aspirations arising from consultation on education in Epping Forest.
- Building on recent achievements and innovations, especially in relation to 'Learning for Biodiversity' and 'Lessons from Nature'; and
- To deliver the final phase of the 2011-14 Plan including exploration of the feasibility of developing the proposed 'Inspired by Epping Forest' brand (with an increased focus on experience and inspiring creative expression) building from current arts based learning provision.

The Head of Centre explained that the aspiration for 2014 included delivering 22,000 learner experiences. The last phase of the funding for the 'Learning for Biodiversity' project from the City Bridge Trust was expected and further fundraising opportunities which would add to the sustainability of the services provided would be explored.

A discussion took place on the proposed income estimates for 2014. It was noted that, in comparison with 2013, cut backs had been made in recognition of reduced external funding and the difficult current economic climate.

In relation to the HO costs set at 14% the Chamberlain undertook to clarify how this figure had been arrived at in conjunction with the Field Studies Council, by March 2014.

It was agreed that the presentation of future reports would include a comparison table of the financial estimates from the previous year along with the percentage change to easily identify the changes which were being made.

RESOLVED – That the Committee approve the 2014 Action Plan and the 2014 financial estimates.

6. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no urgent items.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would arrange the date of the next meeting for April 2014.

The meeting closed at 12.46pm

Chairman

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EPPING FOREST CENTRE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 14 May 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest Centre Joint Consultative Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 11.00am

Present

Members:

Alderman Haines
Verderer Adams

Officers:

Jo Hurst	- Open Spaces Department
Natasha Dogra	- Town Clerk's Office
Alison Elam	- Chamberlain's Department
Steve Bunce	- Epping Forest Field Studies Centre
Mark Bolland	- Field Studies Council

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Deputy Ginsburg, Deputy McGuiness, Verderer Morris, Anthony Thomas, Geoff Brown and Paul Thomas.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were none.

3. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes be deferred to the next Committee meeting.

4. HEAD OF CENTRE'S REPORT ON ACTIVITY

The Committee considered the report of Steve Bunce, Head of the Epping Forest Field Centre. Members noted the following:

- Our operations were highly effective in 2013. We achieved really well against KPIs and important objectives, overcoming the challenges of 9% fewer contracted staff days in 2013 than 2012 and with 63 days lost to sick leave.
- 22,304 Learner experiences took place in 2013, and 99.20% expectations were met or exceeded.
- 100% of criteria met for the Northgate Arisno Gold Shield Health & Safety Award. In addition the projected deficit was turned into a modest surplus as predicted in the October report.
- We delivered learning experiences to learners of all ability levels, aged from four to 'experienced', from a very diverse range of ethnic/social

groups. We used 46 well researched learning sites within and outside of Epping Forest, frequently taking learning nearer to the learners.

- 2,664 grant funded learner experiences were delivered in 2013 – (giving rise to a total of 8,620 which, after just three years, exceeds the target figure of 8,000 (10% of target for total learner experiences) in the four year business plan.
- The EU funded Lessons from Nature (LfN) project, developed and delivered with our European NGO partners, came to end in the autumn and the EU Assessor has subsequently affirmed that the Project delivery was of an appropriate standard. The project has enabled us to build on LfN learning pioneered at EFFC in 2008. The creation of the LfN website with its very significant learning resources has helped us to take a huge step towards the aspiration in the 2011-2014 EFFC Plan to make LfN a major part of the learning provision of the Centre. The challenge for 2014 and beyond would be to promote this resource and the related services to schools and to other audiences and we hope to secure funding to support this.
- The City Bridge Trust funded '**Learning for Biodiversity for Londoners**' project - delivered targeted provision to learners from 6 partner London schools - with additional informal Family drop in sessions and Adult courses – in school grounds, local parks and in Epping Forest. The project left a strong legacy of innovative programme and learning resources, enhanced capacity and improved networking and collaboration.
- Web-content improvements included better pre-course and post-course information, updated course descriptors and more photographs and information about our learning sites. Twitter was used to good effect with the LfN Project. Facebook photo galleries have continued to prove popular including 'Autumn Fungi', Death's Head Hawkmoth, Wildlife Spot of the Day and photographs from our grounds. Improvements were made to existing publicity material, newsletters and the use of social media.
- Following the approval of the budget it became clear that there was an opportunity to reduce staff costs further and this was taken to address the projected deficit with to reduce financial risks. Officers responded to staff turnover arising from the departures of one of our Team Leaders and one of our tutors early in 2013 by appointing replacements at the bottom of the teaching scale.
- The impacts of these changes, together with the consequence of reduced staffing levels already emplaced, meant that we were unable to commit time to the generation of 'additional' (non-core) income. This had been predicted in the 2013 Plan: *'the main impacts of the reduced staffing level willbe ... speed at which we can ... progress work of a developmental nature'*

- Officers were successful in strengthening the core work and this contributed to increased course income which, together with significantly reduced expenditure, produced a pleasing outturn.
- Achieving this financial performance and delivering KPIs alongside ambitious project work arose from huge (unsustainable) efforts by the staff team to try and address the many challenges that we faced in 2013. Officers thanked their staff for their constant hard work and support.

5. **HEAD OF CENTRE'S REPORT ON PROGRESS IN 2014**

The Committee considered the report of Steve Bunce, Head of the Epping Forest Field Centre. Members noted the following:

- One of our Team Leaders left in April after nearly ten years at the Centre to take a senior role at FSC Malham Tarn. As an interim step Officers had replaced her with a new member of our education team so that Officers could continue to deliver courses without disruption. The Bursar/Administrator left on 9 May.
- Further remedial works arising from the Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) undertaken in the summer of 2012 was due to take place in the near future (order 601319). The Contractor had indicated that they would shortly come on site to plan and schedule the work. This should address most outstanding FRA remedial actions. The possible exceptions to this relate to the testing of the lightning conductor and also to the advice to install emergency lighting in the adult toilets. The intentions regarding these were still unclear to me at the time of reporting.
- The boilers for the main building were taken out of commission on 17 January when they were declared unsafe by contractors. Whilst the support from the Superintendent and his team (temporary use of the Visitor Centre and a supply of portable electrical heaters) has been much appreciated the absence of appropriate heating has created a number of issues. Officers thanked the Superintendent of Epping Forest and his team for their constant support during this difficult time/
- These difficulties for Centre staff had also been compounded by the present arrangements for maintenance. Whilst some maintenance receives exemplary attention and the direct City staff contacts were always very helpful, Officers said it was sometimes difficult to understand why other maintenance issues are dealt with in a protracted way where there seems to be a considerable lack of clarity regarding process and intended outcome and where many people seem to be involved in resolving things that would appear to be resolvable in a less time consuming and complex manner. Officers raised this as a query

and not a complaint, and City Corporation Officers agreed to investigate this further.

6. **QUESTIONS**

There were none.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was one item of urgent business.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved: That the date of the next meeting would be confirmed via email.

The meeting closed at 1:00pm

Chairman

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest Centre Joint Consultative Committee	06 Oct 2014
Subject:	Public
Heating arrangements at Epping Forest Field Studies Centre	
Report of:	For Information
Paul Thomson – Superintendent of Epping Forest	
<p>Summary</p> <p>The Epping Forest Field Centre Teaching Block at High Beach has hot water and central heating provided by large oil-fired boilers/calorifiers that have been condemned for carbon monoxide emissions following inspection. There have been considerable delays in replacement. This report gives a brief outline of this, workaround arrangements and future plans.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report 	

Main Report

Background

1. The Epping Forest Field Centre at High Beach consists of a main block housing five classrooms and office space, and other buildings used as accommodation (Ravensmead, Buxton and Harting) as well as a sundry classroom known as the Timber Hut.
2. The Classroom and Office block heating and hot water are supplied by large oil-fired boilers (calorifiers) plus occasional additional electric space heaters. All other buildings are heated by gas or electric systems.
3. On Friday 17th January 2014 a Mitie Inspector visited the premises and work record sheet (4869296) confirmed “*both boilers locked off & oil line shut as they are immediately dangerous*” this was due to hazardous levels of carbon monoxide being produced from the system.

4. Although it was initially believed that parts could be found and replaced quickly, not all the replacement parts could be sourced from the Italian manufacturer due to the age of the system. The City Surveyor therefore determined it was not economical to repair, and a wholesale replacement was required.

Interim Position

5. Having become clear that heating in the teaching block would be compromised for an extended period of many weeks, and large numbers of temporary electric units could not be used due to loading on circuits, The Epping Forest Assets Manager made the temporarily vacated High Beach Visitor Centre available to the Field Centre Team for lessons. This building's wood-chip fired boiler was also inoperative at the time, so this space and teaching block offices were heated using supplementary electric units.
6. The arrangement described above alleviated some but not all of the impacts on teaching staff and students, but some disruption, cold and discomfort was still unavoidable. This arrangement lasted through the cold months until the site was taken over by the Friends of Epping Forest and full heating of the Teaching Block was not required.
7. Costs of lighting, heating and some cleaning of the High Beach Visitor Centre building through this period were met by Epping Forest local risk budgets.

Replacement Options

8. The following replacement options were considered
 - a. Utilise existing gas supply and replace with gas boiler
 - b. Woodchip-powered boiler
 - c. Wholesale like-for-like oil fired boiler
9. Option a, would also have advantages both in efficiency and fuel costs, but initial enquiries showed that although there was a gas supply to the site, it was at the end of a long line and gas pressures would be insufficient to run a system of the required size.
10. Option b, although preferable for sustainability reasons would also have needed considerable changes to infrastructure, possibly a new building to house the Woodchip Boiler, plus a new road for delivery of fuel and maintenance, necessitating formal Planning Permission. This, and the estimated initial outlay of £60K which was twice the cost of an oil-fired boiler, made this reason unaffordable.
11. Option c, like-for-like oil fired system was therefore the only reasonable option.

Costs of replacement

12. The Boiler was in the City Surveyors Additional Works Programme (20 year plan) for replacement in 2015/16 at a cost of £25k as part of £118k of space heating works inc. pipe, radiator and pump replacement.
13. At the time of the failure, City Surveyors were imposing a moratorium on all works, excepting those deemed to have immediate Health and Safety implications.
14. Protracted negotiations around contractor/supplier and funding led to long delays in the project, despite agreements being made at several points in order to move forward.
15. Replacement reached final agreement in late August 2014. To be carried out by Sykes, at an approximate cost of £33K (plus some additional for associated works for asbestos etc) to be met largely from the City Surveyors Additional Works Programme (20 year plan) with a small amount from the City Surveyors Breakdown Budget.

Final Replacement Timescale

16. At time of writing, the replacement works are underway by Sykes, with site clearance having started on Monday 9th September and with planned completion date 26th September.
17. There will be some disruption and noise during this time, EFFC staff, Contractor and Epping Forest representatives are working together to minimise the inconvenience to teaching groups.
18. Although like-for-like the new boiler will deliver improved fuel efficiency as it is a more modern system.

Conclusion

19. It is accepted that delays in the replacement of the Teaching Block heating system were both avoidable and inconvenient. It was fortunate that weather was unseasonably mild, and the alternative use of the Visitor Centre was possible but The City of London is grateful to EFFC staff for their forbearance during what is recognised to be challenging and inhospitable working conditions
20. The new system should be installed and commissioned by the meeting of your Committee, and in good time for the start of this year's cold weather.

Joanne Hurst

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Inspiring environmental understanding through first-hand experience



Epping Forest Field Centre

Report on progress and background to planning



The Centre is managed by FSC for, and on behalf of, the City of London

Head of Centre's report on progress and background to planning

Purpose of report:

The purpose of this report is to provide the planning background for the Joint Committee in relation to the 2015 Plan. It also provides the Committee with an update on progress at the Epping Forest Field Centre in 2014 in advance of the formal report on 2014 that will come to the Committee in the spring of 2015.

I recommend that the report be RECEIVED.

Background

Epping Forest Field Centre (EFFC) delivers the City of London's environmental learning service in Epping Forest; it was established to commemorate the European Year of Conservation in 1970. From its inception the service has been managed by the Field Studies Council (FSC) for, and on behalf of, the City of London Corporation. FSC is an independent educational charity that inspires environmental understanding through first hand experience. The buildings (teaching and ancillary facilities and staff residences) are maintained by the City.

The FSC JCC receives reports on the performance of EFFC and approves a Plan for service provision. It provides an opportunity for the partner organisations to review progress and to provide direction and advice and to agree the funding arrangements (notably the City's annual payment to support the service) for EFFC based on provisional estimates of income and expenditure. The JCC received reports on 2013 and on 2014 at its meeting in May and noted pleasing progress and achievements.

EFFC connects a diverse range of learners (school children, adults and families) of all abilities to the natural world in Epping Forest. The majority of learners are from Greater London with a significant number also coming from Essex with comparatively high numbers of pupils that have free school meals, 'English as an additional language' (BME backgrounds) and/or diverse ethnicity. The service promotes Epping Forest as '*a wonderful place for discovery and learning*' and fosters responsible behaviours in relation to Epping Forest and the wider environment.

The Centre delivered its 500,000th learner experience in 2011.

Delivery against the 2011-14 Plan has been effective as shown in Appendix A - a summary of performance against broad objectives.

Buildings:

Maintenance is carried out by contractors employed by the City of London. (Defect reporting and monitoring, cleaning duties, grounds maintenance duties and routine repairs will be undertaken by Centre staff).

The Centre continues to be generally very well maintained by the City and its contractors. Boiler replacement is the subject of a separate report to the October 2014 meeting of the JCC.

Grounds and teaching sites:

The Centre Grounds and nearby learning sites continue to be very suitable for the provision of a range of great learning experiences.

Staffing and Support Services

The Head of Centre is supported by a ten full-time staff of which two are at senior level. Eight members of the staff have field teaching as the main part of their responsibilities. One member of staff is the Administrator (reception, bookings & finance processor) another is Centre Support Facilitator (main duty person, liaison with contactors, clients, volunteers, visiting tutors, coordinating of courses for adults, grounds maintenance). In addition there is a part-time Cleaner (15hrs pw).

Associate Tutors (subject specialists) on day rates are used to deliver the adult Courses for All programmes.

Community Engagement

The Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre are making progress towards:

- becoming an increasingly active community based organisation
- becoming a focal point for volunteering
- increased membership (907 members at end of June compared to 763 in 2013)
- providing increased support for the Centre (including getting support in kind from suppliers)

The screenshot shows the website for the Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre. The page has a teal and white color scheme. At the top, there is a logo of a leaf and the text 'Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre'. Below this is a navigation menu with buttons for Membership, Volunteering, Donations, Sponsorship, Corporate Social Responsibility, Projects, Current Newsletter, and Past Newsletters. A central image shows a building with a large window. To the right of the image is a text block: 'The Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre are dedicated to raising awareness of and funds for the work of the Field Studies Council at Epping Forest Field Centre, delivering projects and community activities using the Centre's grounds, which are designated a 'breeding place'. The objective is to link the community to Epping Forest Field Centre and to promote community engagement with the Centre. Your support will allow us to continue bringing Environmental Understanding to All. To find out more about the work we do and the activities offered by the Epping Forest Field Centre, please use the links to the left.' Below this text are logos for Yorkshire Tea, Loughton, and Shoe Zone. On the far right, there is a 'Join us on:' section with social media icons and a 'Tweets' section showing a tweet from Nick Laphorn (@nicklaphorn) about recruiting for a Trainee Scheme.

The Centre continues to benefit from the support of a significant number of occasional part-time volunteers providing invaluable help with supporting for teaching, chasing debtors, equipment and other ad hoc renovation, grounds maintenance and cleaning and other general Centre support tasks.

Learning delivery

We continue to offer a range of courses & activities (formal & informal) to participants from 4 years to beyond retirement age (with course lengths from 2 hours to five days). We continuously improve our 'core business' existing product/service range (especially for KS3 & 4 and A level biology and geography) courses in the light of experience, feedback, best practice and external influences (eg curriculum reform).

The EFFC 2011-14 Plan set what was then a 'stretch target' of 80,000 learner experiences across the year period. With the acquisition of significant grants to support learning in the period 2011–13 we were able to ensure that this target could be met reaching more than 22,000 learner experiences in each year. With reducing grant support in 2014 (and reduced staffing levels) this became more challenging in 2014: *'it is probably best to assume that the number of learner experiences will be in the range of 20,000 – 22,000'* [2014 Plan]. As at the summer of 2014 we are

on target to be at the upper end of that range in the current year. By the end of the period 2011-14 we are likely to be some 10% ahead of target by reaching something like 88,000 learner experiences.

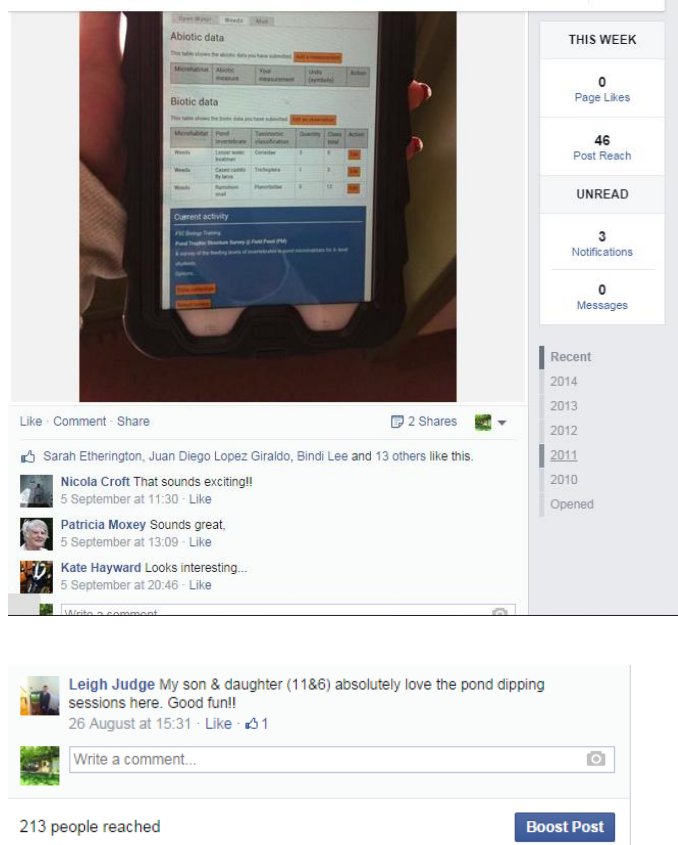
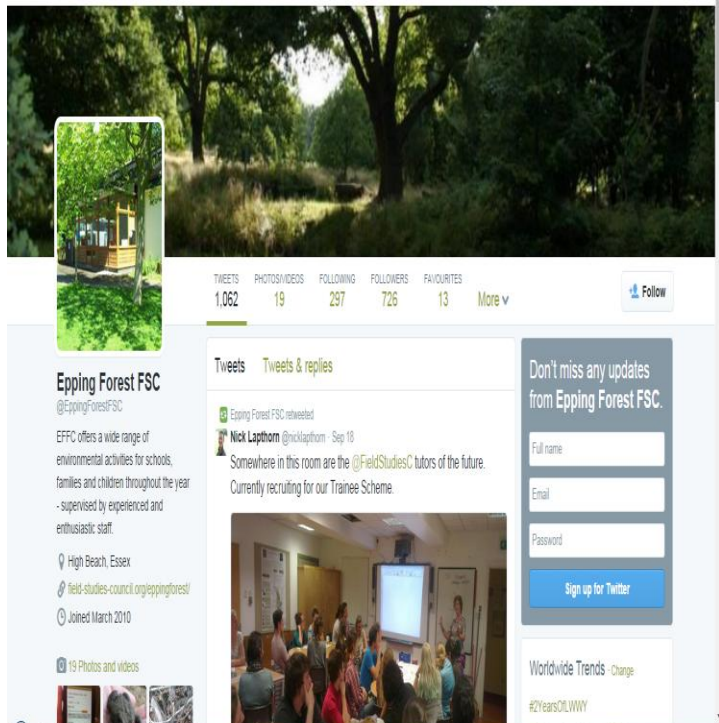
The number of learner experiences has grown significantly across the past two decades and has now levelled at around 22,000 per annum. This is the level that has been estimated in previous JCC papers a practical maximum/optimal capacity level based on limiting factors (see Appendix B) and is approximately double the levels reached in the first two decades of the Centre's life.

Income generation from courses in 2014 is strong. Our 2014 Plan indicated the 'need to focus more on course income and viability (and on quality) rather than overly focussing on high numbers of learning experiences'. As at the summer of 2014 we are on target to match or exceed the 2014 course income budget estimate.

Subject to continuing support and staff continuity the 20,000 – 22,000 learner experiences can be sustained for 2015 (and probably beyond this). It is likely that income can be raised a little through some modest and judicious fees increases as has been achieved in recent years. The likely ongoing desire for our services from our loyal client base and our track record of sound business development support this view. This is backed by capacity to respond to change and the opportunity to build on our innovative project/development work legacies and to benefit from ongoing improvements to web pages and to the use of social media.

Prospects for repeat, referred and recommended business remain very strong with very positive service user feedback and the meeting or exceeding of > 90% expectations.

We are increasingly focussing our promotional activities on content marketing and social media and hope to find more time for these activities in the future.



Current challenges and performance

A 36% staff turnover in 2014 has/is proving to be challenging especially at a time of updating for curriculum reform and coping with heating related issues and other disrupting factors, especially staff sickness. A consequence of these factors is slower than desired progress with funding acquisition, development work and promotional activity.

However as at the summer of 2014 income and expenditure for the year appears to be broadly in line with budget estimates and visitor feedback continues to be excellent and there has been good progress with some developments. In this context the performance probably exceeds that which might reasonably be expected and the new team are enthusiastically embracing the challenge of making further progress in the Autumn Term.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reputation of City, FSC and EFFC itself• The City FSC partnership which will span half a century after the end of this decade• Location, facilities, expertise, flexibility, loyal customers, strong systems, pedagogies and course resources	There is a lack of funding to improve: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• field teaching technology• Ancillary facilities (especially dining space for visitors, non-resident staff and volunteers)• Environmental impacts

Ongoing work is continuing to build on strengths and, subject to limited staff time, to explore means address weaknesses. The 2015 Plan will facilitate this and also refer to the management of risks and exploitation of opportunity.

Current situation analysis and the context for planning for 2015 and beyond

Progress in the period 2011-14 has been very good. In May the JCC noted the strong financial performance and significant achievement. As at the summer of 2014 the Centre performance remains broadly in line with budget. The prospects of maintaining the current level of performance in the future are very good given the exceptionally high levels of service user satisfaction.

EFFC now needs to be able the impacts of curriculum reform and other as yet unclear challenges of the operating environment. It should probably also respond maintain the flexibility and capacity to respond creatively to the evolving aspirations and planning frames of the City and of FSC:

- The City's Education Strategy 2013 -15
- The City's Community Strategy (*'encourage diverse skills development and learning for all'*)
- The City Open Spaces Directorate's Strategic Aims
- The Epping Forest Management Plan
- The Epping Forest Strategy for Learning (see Appendix C)
- Epping Forest Learning Providers Forum Action Plan (being developed from 'Appendix C')
- FSC's new four year planning cycle
- The evolution of FSC London Region

Appendix A:

Summary of performance against 2011 -14 broad objectives:

- 80,000 learner experiences - **ACHIEVED**
We are likely to have delivered approx 88,000 by the end of this period
- (of which) 8,000 subsidised learner experiences- **ACHIEVED**
- Provide new products and approaches relating to four theme areas:

- Learning for Biodiversity – **ACHIEVED**
(and identified by Quality Badge assessors as ‘leading edge’)

We addressed a need to increase taxonomic education and understanding of biodiversity and to increase the attention to this at least on all of our biology courses with funding secured from the City Bridge Trust. This project included networking, capacity and resource development work, and also the delivery teachers’ workshops, schools and community courses at a range of locations.



- Lessons from Nature – **ACHIEVED** (and received terrific responses from Council for Learning Outside of the classroom, AQA and others).
We will built upon our pilot ‘Sustainable Schools’™ and ‘Lessons from Nature’ projects and pioneered learning **from** nature provision with a very significant resource packed website to go beyond traditional learning ‘for’ and ‘about’ nature courses and traditional ‘do less harm’ sustainability courses.



- Epping Forest a special place – **ADAPTED**
Influenced by the views of the Superintendent we have made this a theme across all of our provision rather than a theme area. We have endeavoured to promote Epping Forest as ‘*a wonderful place for discovery and learning*’ and to foster an appreciation of the Forest and to develop a sense of place across all of our provision.
- Inspiration from Epping Forest – **IN PROGRESS**
We have continued with our long – standing practice of delivering well received occasional arts courses and also arts activities as part of cross-curricular course has continued but progress with significant development has been limited. Our Plan had indicated that ‘*once the other three themes have momentum we hope to explore further how we can increase our growth potential for creative arts course in the broadest sense. It is hoped that we will have in place an exciting viable development plan in place by 2014*’. This Plan is not yet in place and may still not be at the end of 2014 simply because of the challenges referred to in the main body of this report. This area of development will be considered further in 2015. Our aspiration is to develop and deliver pilot creative learning experiences (in the broadest sense) identify the market and funding potential.

These Projects have supported the development of delivery modes, markets, products, new income streams and to ensuring increased value of the impacts of our work. Other successful have included the HLF funded ‘Discovering Epping Forest’ (DEF), which has been reported in detail to the JCC, and the EU funded ‘Mind the Gap’ project.

- Develop more local provision at remote learning locations – **ACHIEVED**

We have now have 44 learning sites that we currently use within and outside of Epping Forest.

- Continuously improve the provision of electronic and paper based learning support material – **ACHIEVED** - for core courses as well as courses developed through projects
- Exceed 4.8 visitor feedback score with over 90% of customers scoring us in the highest category on a 5 point scale for overall provision – **ACHIEVED**
- Achieve a significant increase in environmental understanding as a result of an EFFC learning experience – **ACHIEVED**
- Maintain the LOtC quality badge – **ACHIEVED**
- Continue to meet the requirements of appropriate external accreditation including Safety Shield, IIP, Eco-Centre/Green Flag – **ACHIEVED** - subject to pending external assessment for Eco-Centre/Green Flag re-accreditation
- Ensure that the FSC - CoL partnership remains effective and mutually beneficial
This is probably best judged by the JCC
- Collaborate effectively with FSC at corporate level / Head office and other learning locations – **ACHIEVED** - with increasing mutual support across local FSC Centres
- To continue to work effectively with the Associates of EFFC to bring benefits to users of the Centre and extend community links - **PART ACHIEVED** - there is continuing progress but more active volunteers would be needed to accelerate this and hitherto we have not been able to recruit these
The Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre are making progress towards:
 - becoming an increasingly active community based organisation
 - becoming a focal point for volunteering
 - increased membership (currently 723 members)
 - providing increased fundraising and promotional support for the Centre in 2014.
- Be regarded by others as a good partner in all partnerships – **assumed but not yet measured**
- Create a trend of growth in operating surplus to re-invest in our services – **STRONG PERFORMANCE IN RECESSION**
- Utilise funded projects to create growth and also create capacity for future growth – **IN PROGRESS**
- Optimise repeat business whilst continuing to attract new learners in target groups – **ACHIEVED**
- Contribute to the FSC corporate target of a 15% reduction in CO₂ emissions per learner – **ACHIEVED IN SO FAR AS THIS HAS BEEN PRACTICABLE WITH INVESTMENT FROM CITY AND GOOD HOUSEKEEPING BY STAFF TEAM**
- Develop and deliver a dynamic programme of training for EFFC which meets the needs and reasonable aspirations of both staff and the EFFC business – **ACHIEVED**
- Promote, with the 'Associates', volunteer involvement in our work, and enlist at least 1700 volunteer days (13600 volunteer hours) across the lifetime of the plan - **ACHIEVED IN SO FAR AS THIS HAS BEEN PRACTICABLE WITH LIMITED STAFF TIME TO SUPPORT THIS**

- Ensure that staff structure is appropriate to needs of the business – **ACHIEVED** – overcoming challenges identified earlier

Appendix B:

Maximum practical/optimal capacity for learning deliver is limited by these factors:

- limitations of classrooms (number and size of classrooms/ capacity to accommodate peak demand)
- 'market' limitations (school exam periods, smaller group sizes, late cancellations, seasonal preferences, school holidays, 1st/last day/weeks of term)
- resource limitations (environmental impact on the Centre grounds and forest sites, tutorial/support staff (H&S standards), staff availability at short notice, compatibility of different groups).
- impact of high staff turnover in London schools
- smaller class sizes and shorter course lengths at Advanced Level
- curriculum change
- the economic climate
- the high relative cost of transport for day-visits

Appendix C: The Epping Forest Strategy for Learning

Epping Forest Strategy for Learning

– extract from documentation drafted by the Epping Forest Learning Providers Forum for consideration by the City and its Learning Partners:

Our Vision – we want Epping Forest to be widely recognised as a wonderful place for discovery and learning for local people, Londoners and those living beyond London

Our Mission is to inspire and enable people to connect with, learn about, value and enjoy Epping Forest so that they act positively to care for it into the future.

Strategic Aims

Our Strategic Aims direct our activities to ensure we work towards our Vision and Mission.

1 Continue to provide and develop a diversity of learning opportunities in and about Epping Forest to inspire and enrich people's lives

- responding to need and the social, economic and physical environment around us

2 Encourage continuous improvement and development of learning activities and opportunities

- through enabling provision for change in service provision, new programmes or providers and enabling organisations to respond to change and opportunities

3 Promote, strive for and support the pursuit of excellence in all learning activities/experiences

- through benchmarking, development of standard and models of best practice, monitoring and evaluation, working towards awards and training programmes

4 Value and nurture social inclusion and diverse learning activities

- *improving the accessibility of learning activities and the diversity of participants*

5 Support, encourage and develop the community of learning providers in Epping Forest

- through sharing of resources, Service Agreements and the like

6 Ensure that financial resources are commensurate with sustaining and developing learning opportunities

- *including fundraising, income generation, sponsorship, etc.*

7 Improve and increase communications about learning in and about Epping Forest

- *through marketing, branding, effective communication about learning opportunities, raising our profile and increasing influence*

8 Work to mitigate the environmental impacts of our learning activities

- **including how we operate our buildings, transport, impact on the Forest environment, etc.**

9 Work in partnership to deliver our vision

- **through valuing the contribution of others and recognising potential added value**

Background to the ‘Strategy’:

The Strategy follows the ‘Learning Review’. [The City of London Epping Forest commissioned a review of learning provision delivered in Epping Forest, which was undertaken by independent consultants Sara Hoskins and Sally Williams. The funding to undertake the review was provided by the City Bridge Trust (CBT). The aim was to review the provision of lifelong learning in Epping Forest by the City of London and its partners, and to inform the sustainability and potential development of that provision following on from the successful ‘Discovering Epping Forest’ project, part of the wider Heritage Lottery funded Branching Out programme].

The principal findings and summarised principal Recommendations of the Review were as follows:

‘It is evident that learning about and understanding the natural heritage of Epping Forest is not an add-on, it is a core part of CoL’s service delivery. It reinforces many agendas, protecting our natural heritage, providing stimulating and meaningful experiences for all communities and investing in the heritage of children and young people. Epping Forest is a major national asset, a third of which falls within Greater London, one of the most culturally diverse and densely populated cities in the world; its value as a site for learning about natural heritage cannot be undervalued.

The review showed that the quality of current provision is high, generates very positive feedback, with many return visits and continued participation. Without exception all four learning providers on which the review was focused are delivering provision to the capacity of their staff resources.

.....the recommendations are aimed at establishing learning in Epping Forest as a core part of CoL provision and seek to create mechanisms whereby the high quality work being undertaken is sustained and developed’.

Recommendations

1. **EPPING FOREST STRATEGIC VISION FOR LEARNING**

CoL Open Spaces/Epping Forest should strengthen its stated endorsement of the importance of lifelong learning through all its services in Epping Forest.

2. **OPEN SPACES LEARNING NETWORK**

CoL Open Spaces should expand and promote the existing learning network to include relevant staff/volunteers for all CoL Open Spaces divisions, endorsed by Director of Open Spaces / all Superintendents / relevant Open Spaces Committees.

3. **SUSTAINING AND DEVELOPING LEARNING PROVISION**

CoL and the learning providers should aim to at least sustain the current level of learning provision in Epping Forest and, subject to resources, to further develop the provision, building on the strong outcomes of DEF and other programmes including CBT-funded projects.

4. **EPPING FOREST LEARNING NETWORK**

In collaboration with the learning providers CoL should facilitate the establishment of a new Epping Forest Learning Network.

5. **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR LEARNING IN EPPING FOREST**

CoL in collaboration with the learning providers should build on the Epping Forest Strategic Vision for Learning and Epping Forest Learning Network by drawing up a Strategic Framework for Learning in Epping Forest; strands within the framework should address Learning Delivery, Community Engagement, Communications, and Fundraising / Sponsorship / Income Generation.

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Inspiring environmental understanding through first-hand experience



Epping Forest Field Centre



The Centre is managed by FSC for, and on behalf of, the City of London

Head of Centre's report on the Centre's 2015 Plan and Financial Estimates

The **attached** draft 2015 Action Plan with provisional 2015 financial estimates is presented to the Committee **FOR APPROVAL**.

The City of London payment has been estimated at a level that is consistent with the payment for 2012 and 2013.

Recommendation

I would welcome questions and recommend that this Plan be approved.

Contact:

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Background and current situation analysis

The background to this Plan is recorded in a report to the October 2014 meeting of the JCC.

Progress in the period 2011-14 has been very good. The JCC received a report on 2013 performance at its meeting in May 2014 and noted the strong financial performance and significant achievement. As at the summer of 2014 the Centre performance remains broadly in line with budget.

Income generation has remained strong despite a challenging economic back drop and delivery costs have been effectively constrained.

In recent years the Centre has delivered its services at what is effectively capacity level for the physical and human resources of the Centre. The prospects of maintaining this in the future are very good given the exceptionally high levels of service user satisfaction.

Flexibility and diversity of provision has been crucial to success and are likely to continue to be important factors in coping with the impacts of curriculum reform and other changes in the operating environment.

It would also seem to be appropriate to respond to the as yet unclear challenges of the operating environment and to the evolving aspirations and planning frames of the City and of FSC:

- The City's Education Strategy 2013 -15
- The City's Community Strategy (*'encourage diverse skills development and learning for all'*)
- The City Open Spaces Directorate's Strategic Aims
- The Epping Forest Management Plan
- The Epping Forest Strategy for Learning
- Epping Forest Learning Providers Forum Action Plan
- FSC's new four year planning cycle
- The evolution of FSC London Region (a Head of Region is now in place).

Accordingly the plans proposed for 2015:

- build on strengths and past achievements and retain the breadth and depth of provision
- take forward innovations and ideas from the 2012-14 plan for which there is still scope for development
- have the flexibility to allow adaptation to changing circumstances
- are based on costs and resources that are similar to 2014

It is envisaged that the focus will be on:

- maintaining participation levels at between 20,000 and 22,000 learners (as 2014)
- meeting or exceeding the expectations of all service users and stakeholders
- maintaining diverse audiences (with a strong emphasis on BME, English as an additional language and 'free schools meals' students) that are predominantly from London
- pursuing continuous improvement rather than radical change but still responding imaginatively to curriculum change and other challenges/opportunities
- maintaining and developing the City/FSC partnership and responding imaginatively to evolving expectations from the two organisations
- promoting Epping Forest as '*a wonderful place for discovery and learning*'
- highlighting the value of the work of EFFC to the key external audiences of the stakeholders in collaboration with the publicity officers of FSC and the City.

Ongoing consideration will also continue to be given to how we can best take forward the legacies of our key projects ('Sustainable Schools', 'Discovering Epping Forest', 'Learning for Biodiversity for Londoners' and 'Lessons from Nature') focussing on:

- use of the new courses & resources
- pedagogies
- operating systems
- learning sites
- audiences
- partnerships

It is envisaged that risk management will focus on:

- maintaining flexible systems and operations and a wide range of services to cope with changes to the operating environment and markets
- ensuring the financial viability of core services
- ensuring sensible exit strategies for any new developments/projects utilising external grants
- maintaining the mutual value of the FSC/City of London Corporation partnership
- providing excellent levels of customer care to optimise repeat visits and referrals
- maintaining excellent standards of health & safety, child protection and operations to maintain the Centre's reputation

As always staffing remains the crucial controllable determinant of income as well as expenditure. It is also the resource that determines the degree of success in the delivery of mission and achievement of the objectives in this Plan; retention and successful succession planning will continue to be of crucial importance.

We will continue with attempts to foster the growth of the Associates of EFFC as a community based supporter organisation bringing benefits in terms of volunteer engagement, income generation, community links, public relations and promotional activity.

We plan to utilise our marketing tools as effectively as we can to ensure that we optimise bookings. We have discontinued Newsletters (except for Associates). We are planning to increase our content marketing output with frequent web-based news stories and very active use of social media. We will continue to monitor how this content is accessed by those searching key terms and to adapt accordingly.




In addition to modest growth in course income generation a range of additional sources of income will be explored. We hope to receive increased financial support and support in kind from the Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre, to encourage schools to use the Pupil Premium to fund courses and exploit the project legacies that provide opportunities for new funding. We also hope to explore Arts sector funding ('Inspired by Epping Forest').

It is hoped that this will generate some additional net income in 2015 but this is too speculative to include in estimates. Instead the current pragmatic assumption is that new (project) funding will be cost neutral with the prospect of longer term benefits.

Subject to funding we hope to:

- significantly increase biological recording and the utilisation of this important data
- pair our subject expert Associate Tutors with dynamic and highly skilled 'new generation' tutors (this should build the field skills and taxonomic/ecological expertise of the latter and the capacity for continuation of this learning long into the future and 'freshen' presentational styles in the short term).
- tower and low ropes project
- ICT technology (extract from development fund application)

Target setting: - Key performance indicators for 2015:

Key performance indicators	2012 Actual	2013 Actual	2014 Target	2014 Probable	2015 Target
Learner experiences	22,140	22,304	20 - 22,000	20 - 22,000	20 - 22,000
Volunteer days	465	343	350	280	350
People: IIP	FSC awarded: 	Standards maintained	Maintain Standards	Standards maintained	Maintain Standards
Quality	Standards maintained.	 Standards Exceeded	Maintain Standards	Standards maintained.	Maintain Standards
Health & Safety	Standards maintained.	 100% criteria met	Maintain Standards	Standards maintained.	Maintain Standards
Meet/ exceed customer expectations	>90% of customers recorded 'yes' on feedback forms	>90% of customers recorded 'yes' on feedback forms	> 90% of customers to record 'yes' on feedback forms	> 90% of customers will record 'yes' on feedback forms	> 90% of customers to record 'yes' on feedback forms
Increase customer environmental understanding	>90% of customers recorded 'yes' on feedback forms	>90% of customers recorded 'yes' on feedback forms	> 90% of customers to record 'yes' on feedback forms	> 90% of customers will record 'yes' on feedback forms	> 90% of customers to record 'yes' on feedback forms

Our broad objectives for 2015

The broad objectives (below) are being developed into a series of specific and measurable objectives for individual staff

- Deliver at least 20,000 learner experiences
- Constrain expenditure exceed forecast income
- Ensure that we have appropriate provision to meet changing demands from schools (curriculum reform) and that all of our programmes consistently adopt our own internal best practice (and external best practice) and that they engender enjoyment and discovery learning
- Maintain our reputation for outstanding visitor satisfaction, responding effectively to issues and opportunities arising from feedback
- Work effectively with the Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre to foster meaningful support for the work of the Centre the delivery of the Associate's Plan introducing the proposed income generating 'Official Sponsor' category of membership
- Produce more web-based news stories (with search engine optimisation) with ever increasing utilisation of social media
- Seek support for marketing and publicity from appropriate City and FSC HO staff especially in relation to the promotion of the value of our service to key City/FSC audiences
- Implement the Health and Safety plan and continue to meet 100% of the requirements of Northgate Arinso Safety Shield Gold standard
- Continue to meet the requirements of IIP, ensuring an effective staff & volunteer team with a commitment to an exceptional level of performance, development and continuous improvement
- Liaise with Voluntary Action Epping Forest, City of London and other partners to share ideas and to seek continued improvements in the relation to support for and benefits from volunteers
- Collaborate effectively with City of London officers in relation to maintenance of the facilities and improvements to environmental impacts where feasible
- Demonstrate efforts to continuously improve our environmental impacts
- Maintain and improve where possible the Centre grounds for wildlife, learning and enjoyment, including (subject to feasibility) the provision of new features (viewing platform, low ropes course, improved access to wheelchair path and pond complex) - subject to permissions and feasibility
- Seek additional funding that will improve the financial performance within 2015 and support aspirations and areas for development identified above and also the 'inspired by Epping Forest' (arts) provision, support
- Focus attention on develop when opportunities and resources coincide

The 2014 financial performance will still be subject to significant potential fluctuation until beyond the third quarter. FSC's formal 2015 budgeting process begins in November 2014 and City funding for EFFC for is unknown at this time. These things may all require updating of these initial estimates:

Account Heading	Budget 2014	Budget 2015	% Change
Teaching	£285,000	£305,000	7%
Grants, sponsorship & restricted funds	£6,800	£0	-100%
Others (staff rent, hire, professional services, sales)	£20,000	£20,000	0%
Investment fund	£2,500	£2,500	0%
Sub total	£314,300	£327,500	4%
City of London Corporation Funding	£52,752	£52,752	0%
Total EFFC Income	£367,052	£328,304	-11%
Salaries & associate tutor costs	£276,000	£276,000	0%
Training	£500	£500	0%
Heat & Light	£11,500	£11,500	0%
Insurance	£8,700	£9,000	3%
Transport	£2,500	£2,100	-16%
Library & equipment	£2,500	£6,000	140%
Food	£3,500	£4,700	34%
Cleaning	£1,300	£1,500	15%
Uniform	£100	£200	100%
Premises, furniture & estate	£1,500	£2,400	60%
Administration	£10,000	£10,000	0%
Rates & water	£7,800	£8,000	3%
Depreciation	£1,050	£1,100	-100%
HO Costs set at 14%	£45,773	£45,221	-100%
Total Expenditure	£372,723	£368,231	-100%
Operating Surplus/ Deficit	£-5,671	£-39,927	

Account Heading	Notes
Teaching	2014 income is likely to be higher than the forecast and fees increases (from 2014 and for 2015#) should increase income by about 7% beyond 2014 estimate. # Some modest increases to 'peak season' primary school group fees, to 'peak season' secondary school per capita fees and to adult course fees.
Grants, sponsorship & restricted funds	We hope for additional income but this remains entirely speculative at this stage
Others (staff rent, hire, professional services, sales)	This has been relatively stable in recent years
Investment fund	This has been relatively stable in recent years
Sub total	
City of London Funding	

Total EFFC Income	
Salaries & associate tutor costs	Staff turnover has led to appointments on lower scale points
Training	We are likely to exceed the 2014 budget due to staff turnover, the need for compliance training and the need to respond to curriculum reform.
Heat & Light	2014 provides no guide for 2015 due to heating breakdown. The 2014 budget will be a better guide than the actual. FSC officers have secured a new agreement for oil supply that will reduce oil costs and the new boiler supplied by the City should use energy more efficiently.
Insurance	Currently a rounded up quote; we are awaiting further information.
Transport	Reflecting some cost reductions in 2014 which should be sustained in 2015.
Library & equipment	The demands of A level individual investigations and GCSE controlled assessments have increased expenditure in 2014 and this will continue into 2015. An additional allowance of £2,500 has been added to purchase IPADS – see 'areas for development'
Food/other course costs	'Other course costs' rise by £1,250 with inclusion of room hire for outreach courses for adults.
Cleaning	Need to meet rising costs of materials.
Uniform	Costs have been higher with increased staff turnover; it is hoped this will settle down.
Premises, furniture & estate	There is an allowance in here for overdue furniture replacement in Ravensmead (shared staff accommodation)
Administration	Reductions in photocopier contact costs should match other rising costs
Rates & water	Currently a rounded up quote; we are awaiting further information
Depreciation	Currently a rounded up quote; we are awaiting further information
FSC Central Costs set at 14%	
Total Expenditure	
Operating Surplus/ Deficit	