



Epping Forest Centre Joint Consultative Committee

Date: THURSDAY, 3 MARCH 2016
Time: 3.00 pm – 4:00pm
Venue: COMMITTEE ROOMS, WEST WING, GUILDHALL.

Members: Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman)
Philip Woodhouse (Deputy Chairman)
Verderer Peter Adams
Geoff Brown, FSC Honorary Treasurer
Deputy Catherine McGuinness
Verderer Richard Morris
Anthony Thomas
Sylvia Moys

Enquiries: Natasha Dogra
0207 332 1434
Natasha.dogra@cityoflondon.gov.uk

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 - 4)
4. **OPEN SPACES LEARNING PROGRAMME**
Report of the Director of Open Spaces.
For Information
(Pages 5 - 10)
5. **REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS - EPPING FOREST 2014/15 & 2015/16**
Report of the Chamberlain and Director of Open Spaces.
For Decision
(Pages 11 - 22)
6. **EPPING FOREST FIELD CENTRE HEAD OF CENTRE'S REPORT ON ACTIVITY IN 2014**
For Information
(Pages 23 - 28)
7. **EPPING FOREST FIELD CENTRE HEAD OF CENTRE'S REPORT ON ACTIVITY IN 2015**
For Information
(Pages 29 - 32)
8. **HEAD OF CENTRE'S REPORT ON THE CENTRE'S FINANCIAL ESTIMATES**
For Information
(Pages 33 - 34)
9. **HEAD OF CENTRE'S REPORT ON THE EPPING FOREST FIELD CENTRE PLAN FOR 2016**
For Information
(Pages 35 - 38)
10. **EPPING FOREST FIELD STUDIES CENTRE QB ASSESSMENT SUMMARY**
For Information
(Pages 39 - 42)
11. **QUESTIONS**
12. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

HEPPING FOREST CENTRE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Monday, 6 October 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Epping Forest Centre Joint Consultative Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 11.15 am

Present

Members:

Alderman Gordon Haines (Chairman)	Verderer Richard Morris
Geoff Brown, FSC Honorary Treasurer	Anthony Thomas

Officers:

Katie Odling	Town Clerk's Department
Sue Ireland	Director of Open Spaces
Paul Thomson	Superintendent, Epping Forest
Steve Bunce	Epping Forest Field Studies Centre
Simon Ward	FSE London
Jo Hurst	Open Spaces Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Deputy McGuinness, George Abrahams, Mark Bollard and Verderer Adams.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

Resolved: the minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

4. HEATING ARRANGEMENTS AT EPPING FOREST FIELD STUDIES CENTRE

Members were informed that the Epping Forest Field Centre at High Beach consisted 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.

On Friday 17th January 2014 a Mitie Inspector visited the premises and 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. 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.

Members noted 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. 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.

In response to a query, Officers clarified that the 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.

5. **EPPING FOREST FIELD CENTRE PROGRESS AND BACKGROUND TO PLANNING**

Members noted that the Epping Forest Field Centre (EFFC) delivered 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 was an independent educational charity that inspires environmental understanding through first-hand experience. The buildings (teaching and ancillary facilities and staff residences) were maintained by the City.

Members noted that they received reports in 2013 and in 2014 at the meeting in May and noted pleasing progress and achievements. EFFC connected 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 promoted Epping Forest as '*a wonderful place for discovery and learning*' and fostered responsible behaviours in relation to Epping Forest and the wider environment.

Officers said that the Centre delivered its 500,000th learner experience in 2011. Delivery against the 2011-14 Plan had been effective as outlined below.

Maintenance was 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 continued to be generally very well maintained by the City and its contractors. The Centre Grounds and nearby learning sites continued to be very suitable for the provision of a range of great learning experiences.

The Head of Centre was supported a ten full-time staff of which two are at senior level. Eight members of the staff had 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). 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 Officers were on target to match or exceed the 2014 course income budget estimate.

In response to a query, Members noted that a 36% staff turnover in 2014 was 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 was slower than desired progress with funding acquisition, development work and promotional activity. However, income and expenditure for the year appeared to be broadly in line with budget estimates and visitor feedback continues to be excellent and there has been good progress with some developments. The performance probably exceeded that which might reasonably be expected and the new team were enthusiastically embracing the challenge of making further progress in the Autumn Term.

6. EPPING FOREST FIELD CENTRE PLAN AND FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2015

Members were informed that progress in the period 2011-14 had been very good. The Committee 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 remained broadly in line with budget. Income generation remained strong despite a challenging economic back drop and delivery costs had been effectively constrained.

In recent years the Centre had 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 were very good given the exceptionally high levels of service user satisfaction. Flexibility and diversity of provision had been crucial to success and were likely to continue to be important factors in coping with the impacts of curriculum reform and other changes in the operating environment.

Members noted that staffing remained the crucial controllable determinant of income as well as expenditure. It was also the resource that determined the degree of success in the delivery of mission and achievement of the objectives in this Plan; retention and successful succession planning would continue to be of crucial importance.

Officers informed Members that subject to funding it was hoped that Officers could:

- significantly increase biological recording and the utilisation of this important data.

- pair 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).

7. **QUESTIONS**

There were no questions.

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

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 12.55 pm

Chairman

Agenda Item 4

Committees	Dates:
Epping Forest and Commons Committee Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee West Ham Park Committee Open Spaces Committee EF Joint Consultative Committee	7 September 2015 21 September 2015 12 October 2015 12 October 2015 3 March 2016
Subject: Open Spaces Learning Programme	Public
Report of: Sue Ireland, Director of Open Spaces	For Information

Summary

A wide variety of learning services are offered across the Open Spaces Department to further our departmental objective of enriching the lives of Londoners. The Open Spaces Committee, at its October 2014 meeting, agreed the development of a departmental education strategy. This report describes the learning framework, which will be used to deliver learning outcomes across the open spaces.

The current learning provision lacks coordination, consistent and robust evaluation, and strategic focus, which has resulted in a disparate offer and challenges in securing external funding. In response to these challenges, a new outcomes-based approach to developing and delivering learning activities (education, play, volunteering, and research) has been developed with a strategic focus on engaging with deprived communities bordering the City's open spaces. The new learning framework and programme aims to develop a robust evidence base for the impact of learning activities; to enable more effective fundraising, involve volunteers in the creation and management of learning activities, and work with new and existing partners; all to the furtherance of our charitable objectives of "recreation and enjoyment" for the public.

The delivery of this programme will require a new operating model involving some realignment of staff roles and responsibilities at some Open Spaces, however the full extent of these changes will depend on the result of a funding application to the City Bridge Trust and other funding arrangements.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:-

- Members note the development of the learning framework and the progress made.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Open Spaces provides a range of formal learning services including national curriculum focused school sessions, research opportunities and informal learning services such as walks and talks, facilitated play, learning events and workshops, volunteer opportunities and work experience.
2. The provision of learning services is not directly reflected in the founding statutory duties of the relevant Acts of Parliament that govern our Charities, which are to protect open spaces and preserve the natural aspect to provide for the 'recreation and enjoyment of the public'. However the learning programme contributes both directly to protection through the development of public understanding and appreciation and to recreation and enjoyment by developing understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing and a tangible connection to open spaces. Learning also contributes to the departmental business plan objectives to 'enrich the lives of Londoners by providing a high quality and engaging educational and volunteering opportunities'. Furthermore, the provision of learning on the City's open spaces directly contributes to the aims of the City's Education Policy to enrich the lives of London's children through the use of our cultural, open spaces and recreational assets.
3. Learning provision across the open spaces varies significantly with large, well developed programmes for schools and families at Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath and smaller programmes at other sites. Similarly, varying levels and structures of volunteering occur across the department with some managed by friends groups and some internally coordinated. These services have been developed and managed on individual sites without the benefit of coordination across the department in a single consistent and measurable programme.
4. Learning services are funded primarily through grants or local risk budgets, and increasingly through charging for activities. Between 2011-15 a significant proportion of learning activities across the department were funded through a four year grant from the City Bridge Trust. Additional funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund supported programmes at Epping Forest, as well as partnership projects on Hampstead Heath. The introduction of a new charging model at Hampstead Heath has allowed the schools programme to contribute to the cost of freelance field teachers. However, learning activities are still largely dependent on achieving external funding to meet the cost of operation.
5. In October 2014, a report was presented to the Open Spaces Committee highlighting the need to develop a new coordinated learning programme and strategy for the department. The report provided a review of the current education activities across the department, the effect of recent external funding on the continuing development of education and the costs of education and implications

of the service based review. In particular, the report suggested that learning activities should continue to be funded through external sources to reduce impacts on the Open Spaces Charitable Trust budgets and contribute to departmental savings. As a result, in order to fund the new learning programme, the report proposed the submission of an application for funding to the City Bridge Trust.

Current Position

6. In January 2015, the department began developing an application for support from the City Bridge Trust to fund learning activities. As part of the application process, a new learning framework was developed to inform the prioritisation and strategic direction of learning services. An evaluation of current learning activities highlighted a lack of robust and consistent measurement, as well as a lack of evidence demonstrating the success of those learning activities. Each division monitors output data through participation and satisfaction levels to varying degrees. However, with the notable exception of the Discovering Epping Forest (DEF) Project, the current evaluation techniques employed do not measure the impact that activities have on participants or the outcomes achieved. As a result, the success of our current learning activities cannot be assessed accurately against the new learning framework.
7. Current trends in the fundraising sector tend towards projects that are able to demonstrate measurable outcomes directly attributable to the activities provided – specifically the impact of the learning experience. Due to the lack of coordinated evidence of the impact that learning activities have on participants, it is increasingly challenging to secure external funding for learning activities.
8. In order to respond to these challenges, a new learning programme and an associated operating model are being prepared to ensure that the department is able to continue to provide demonstrable learning outcomes, achieve measurable impact in our local communities, and be well positioned to apply for future external funding.

Progress

9. The Director of Open Spaces and the Open Spaces Senior Leadership Team have prepared a learning framework for the department which focuses on five high level learning impact areas of understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing and connection. This is attached as Appendix 1.
10. Each impact area has been developed into a set of measurable outcomes which will be monitored across all learning activities. Measuring these outcomes and impact areas will provide a more robust analysis of the success of learning activities. Furthermore, the evidence base provided by this outcomes-based approach will allow more strategic decision making and prioritisation, as well as a greater ability to access and secure external funding for activities in the future.

11. The outcomes-based learning programme will have a new strategic focus on engaging with deprived communities surrounding our open spaces. The City's open spaces border some of the most deprived communities in London with the poorest access to green spaces. A variety of opportunities including family events, school sessions and play activities will be provided to help overcome the barriers for accessing green spaces in these communities.
12. To better direct and report on the successful delivery of the strategic impact framework, the learning programme will be managed as a coordinated programme of activities encompassing formal education opportunities, organised play activities, volunteering, and research.
13. Experience from previous projects has demonstrated that engaging volunteers in the delivery of learning opportunities has many benefits including: increasing confidence; involvement and wellbeing of the volunteers; creating robust legacies for learning activities beyond the end of projects; increasing the employability of volunteers and building community support for learning activities. As a result, developing teams of volunteers in the creation and delivery of learning activities will be a priority in the future. The learning programme will also seek to work closely with existing and new partners to develop more successful learning projects and activities.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

14. The learning programme will be the main mechanism for delivering the departmental objective of 'enriching the lives of Londoners by providing a high quality and engaging educational and volunteering opportunities'. The achievement of our strategic outcomes will also contribute to our charitable objectives of "recreation and enjoyment".
15. The learning programme supports the aims of the City of London Education Policy vision to 'use its outstanding cultural, heritage, open and recreational assets to enrich the education of children both in City schools and across London'.

Implications

16. **Financial Implications** - A new modular approach to delivering learning has been developed. The whole programme is costed at approximately £400,000 per annum, with the overall cost reducing over time as income streams are developed. An application to support part of these costs was submitted to the City Bridge Trust in June 2015 for consideration. Additional funding mechanisms are also being explored.
17. The learning programme will help contribute to departmental savings identified as part of the corporate Service Based Review process. Due to the non-statutory nature of learning activities, they will be provided through externally fundraised income, reducing the impact on the Open Spaces Charitable Trust budgets. The department is exploring a range of funding opportunities, to ensure the delivery of the learning programme in the future.

18. Human Resources Implications – The full implications of a new operating model for learning remain dependent on the outcome of external funding. The model is expected to impact on the roles and responsibilities of some staff that currently deliver learning activities; details are provided in a separate report to this meeting.

Conclusion

19. In order to capitalise on fundraising opportunities for non-statutory learning provision, a new centrally coordinated outcomes-based approach will be adopted by the Open Spaces Department. This approach will allow the development of a robust body of evidence regarding the impact of learning activities across five strategic impact areas; understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing, and connection. To achieve this change in the delivery of learning activities, learning will be coordinated as a single programme, which will focus on delivering to deprived communities close to our open spaces, through the involvement of volunteers and partners in the development of future activities.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Strategic Impact Framework for Learning

Background Papers

Open Spaces Education Strategy – 13th October 2014 (Open Spaces Committee)

Grace Rawnsley

Education Projects Development Manager, Open Spaces

T: 020 7332 3523

E: grace.rawnsley@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Strategic Impact Framework for Learning

What we are trying to do				
Make a positive impact on the communities, who use, or border, our green spaces through learning activities				
By positive impact we mean...				
Understanding People understand and value the importance of our green spaces	Confidence People are confident to use our green spaces, as part of our activities or independently	Involvement People take positive action for, and get involved with, our green spaces	Wellbeing People have restorative and meaningful experiences in our open spaces	Connection People develop a sense of place with our open spaces, and pass this down through generations

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Epping Forest and Commons Committee	3 November 2014	
EF Joint Consultative Committee	3 March 2016	
Subject: REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS - EPPING FOREST 2014/15 & 2015/16		
Report of: The Chamberlain The Director of Open Spaces		Public For Decision

Summary

This report updates the Committee on Epping Forest's latest approved revenue budget for 2014/15 and seeks approval for a provisional revenue budget for 2015/16, for subsequent submission to the Finance Committee. The budgets have been prepared within the resources allocated to the Director and the table below summarises the position.

Summary of Table 1	Latest Approved Budget	Original Budget	Movement
	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	£000
Expenditure	5,891	5,737	(154)
Income	(2,123)	(1,774)	349
Support Services	1,002	1,012	10
Total Net Expenditure	4,770	4,975	205

Overall the provisional Original budget for 2015/16 totals £4,975, an increase of £205,000 compared with the latest approved budget for 2014/15. The main reasons for this increase are :-

An increase of £144,000 in the City Surveyor's Local Risk (of which £139,000 relates to Repairs & Maintenance), a decrease of £268,000 in Other Grants, Reimbursements and Contributions, off-set by a reduction of £102,000 in Premises Related expenditure, a reduction of £57,000 in Supplies & Services, and a reduction of £94,000 in Transfer to Reserves.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

- Review the provisional 2015/16 revenue budget to ensure that it reflects the Committee's objectives and, if so, approve the budget for submission to the Finance Committee;
- Review and approve the draft Capital Budget;
- Authorise the Chamberlain, in consultation with the Director of Open Spaces, to revise these budgets to allow for any further implications arising from Corporate Projects, departmental reorganisations and other reviews, and changes to the Additional Works Programme.
- If specific service based review proposals included with this budget report are rejected by the Committee, or other Committees request that further proposals are pursued, that the substitution of other suitable proposals for a corresponding amount is delegated to the Town Clerk in discussion with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the relevant Committee. If the substituted saving is not considered to be straight forward in nature, then the Town Clerk shall also consult the Chairman and Deputy Chairmen of the Policy and Resources Committee prior to approving an alternative proposal(s).

Main Report

Introduction

1. The City of London Corporation owns and manages almost 11,000 acres of historic and natural Open Spaces for public recreation and enjoyment. This includes Epping Forest which is a registered charity and is funded from City's Cash. Epping is run at no cost to the communities that it serves as it is funded principally by the City, together with donations, sponsorship, grants and trading income.

2. This report sets out the proposed revenue budget and capital budgets for 2015/16. The Revenue Budget management arrangements are to:
 - Provide a clear distinction between local risk, central risk, and recharge budgets.
 - Place responsibility for budgetary control on departmental Chief Officers.
 - Apply a cash limit policy to Chief Officers' budgets.
3. The budget has been analysed by the service expenditure and compared with the latest approved budget for the current year.
4. The report also compares the current year's budget with the forecast outturn.

Business Planning Priorities

5. The key Projects for each Open Space for the next three years were included in the Open Spaces Department Business Plan for 2014-2017 which was approved in May 2014. These include :-
 - Completing of the Highams Park Dam strengthening works, and associated consultation with local residents and park users during disruption.
 - Continuation of the Grazing Expansion Plan, including completion of construction of new overwintering infrastructure at Great Gregories.
 - Detailed planning of savings, efficiencies and enhanced income as laid out in the CoL Service Based Review, with foundation work on known constraints, including drafting of a Various Powers Act

Proposed Revenue Budget for 2015/16

6. The proposed Revenue Budget for 2015/16 is shown in Table 1 analysed between:
 - Local Risk Budgets – these are budgets deemed to be largely within the Chief Officer's control.
 - Central Risk Budgets – these are budgets comprising specific items where a Chief Officer manages the underlying service, but where the eventual financial outturn can be strongly influenced by external factors outside of his/her control or are budgets of a corporate nature (e.g. interest on balances and rent incomes from investment properties).
 - Support Services and Capital Charges – these cover budgets for services provided by one activity to another. The control of these costs is exercised

at the point where the expenditure or income first arises as local or central risk. Further analysis can be found in Appendix 2.

7. The provisional 2015/16 budgets, under the control of the Director of Open Spaces being presented to your Committee, have been prepared in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Policy & Resources and Finance Committees. These include continuing the implementation of the required budget reductions across both local and central risks, as well as the proper control of transfers of non-staffing budgets to staffing budgets. As part of the Service Based Review a saving of £237,000 has been made in year one (2015/16), £135,000 in year two (16/17), and £120,000 in year three (17/18). The saving of £237,000 will be made through the ending of the City Bridge Trust grant for educational and volunteering activities. As part of the Service Based Review the educational activities of the department were judged to be suitable for funding from the Bridge House Estates charitable fund to support these activities and an application will be made through the City Bridge Trust before the start of the financial year. . The budget has been prepared within the resources allocated to the Director. Within these budgets it has been assumed that an application for long term grant funding at the same level as the current CBT grant will be successful. However, the results of any application will not be known until early in 2015. An allowance has also been given towards any potential pay and price increases of 2% in 2015/16.

TABLE 1 EPPING FOREST SUMMARY						
Analysis of Service Expenditure	Local or Central Risk	Actual 2013-14 £'000	Latest Approved Budget 2014-15 £'000	Original Budget 2015-16 £'000	Movement 2014-15 to 2015-16 £'000	Paragraph Reference
EXPENDITURE						
Employees	L	2,792	2,641	2,679	38	
Premises Related Expenses	L	614	645	543	(102)	10
R & M (City Surveyor's Local Risk including cleaning)	L	1,234	1,057	1,201	144	11
Transport Related Expenses	L	231	241	252	11	
Supplies & Services	L	699	595	538	(57)	12
Transfer to Reserves	L	118	168	74	(94)	13
Transfer to Reserves (To fund Capital Expenditure)	C	788	0	0	0	
Transfer to Reserves (Capital Charges)	C	326	544	450	(94)	14
Total Expenditure		6,802	5,891	5,737	(154)	
INCOME						
Government Grants	L	(323)	(247)	(247)	0	
Other Grants, Reimbursements and Contributions	L	(47)	(518)	(250)	268	15
Other Grants, Reimbursements and Contributions	C	(1,153)	0	0	0	
Customer, Client Receipts	L	(984)	(796)	(809)	(13)	
Investment Income	C	(7)	(18)	(18)	0	
Transfer from Reserves	L	(277)	0	0	0	
Transfer from Reserve (Capital Charges)	C	(326)	(544)	(450)	94	16
Total Income		(3,117)	(2,123)	(1,774)	349	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE/ (INCOME) BEFORE SUPPORT SERVICES		3,685	3,768	3,963	195	
SUPPORT SERVICES						
Central Support		848	829	829	0	
Recharges within Fund		131	159	168	9	
Recharges Across Funds		1	14	15	1	
Total Support Services		980	1,002	1,012	10	
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE/(INCOME)		4,665	4,770	4,975	205	

8. Income and favourable variances are presented in brackets. An analysis of this Revenue Expenditure by Service Managed is provided in Appendix 1. Only significant variances (generally those greater than £50,000) have been commented on in the following paragraphs.
9. Overall there is an increase of £205,000 between the 2014/15 latest approved budget and the 2015/16 original budget. This movement is explained in the following paragraphs.
10. The decrease of £102,000 in Premises Related Expenses is mainly due to a reduction in client funded Repairs & Maintenance work across the Assets Team and Epping.
11. The 2014/15 Latest Approved Budget reflects the re-allocation of the full programme to reflect the expenditure that is anticipated will be incurred in the year.

The main reason for the £144,000 increase in the City Surveyor's Local Risk (including cleaning) is due to a budget movement of £139,000 for Repairs & Maintenance which relates to the phasing and level of new bids within the Additional Works Programme.

The 2015/16 Additional Works Programme is based on the bids detailed in the report to your Committee in May 2014. The final sum which was endorsed by the Corporate Asset Sub Committee in June 2014 totalled £450,500. The anticipated balance of remaining Additional Works Programme schemes of £491,000 has also been incorporated.

The basis on which costs are charged under the Building Repairs and Maintenance contract is being reviewed. The present costs, which are based on a square footage basis, are to be replaced by costs relating to the individual assets of each property. The outcome of the review is likely to result in variations to the budgets that have been submitted for 2014/15 and 2015/16. The City Surveyor will report separately on any significant changes.

A decision on the funding of the programme will be made by the Resource Allocation Sub Committee. It may therefore be necessary to adjust the budgets to reflect the Resource Allocation Sub Committee's decision.

TABLE 2 - CITY SURVEYOR LOCAL RISK	Latest Approved Budget 2014/15 £'000	Original Budget 2015/16 £'000
Repairs & Maintenance (including cleaning)		
Additional Works Programme		
Epping Forest	796	942
	796	942
Planned & Reactive Works (Breakdown & Servicing)		
Epping Forest	204	197
	204	197
Cleaning		
Epping Forest	57	62
	57	62
Total City Surveyor	1,057	1,201

12. The £57,000 reduction in Supplies and Services in Local Risk is mainly due to a reduction in Professional Fees associated with HLF as the project has come to an end.
13. The £94,000 reduction in Transfer to Reserves is due to the ending of the HLF project which required Epping to make a contribution from Local Risk.
14. The net decrease of £94,000 in Central Risk Transfer to Reserves between the 2014/15 Latest Approved Budget and the 2015/16 original estimate relates mainly to the fall-out of a one-off charge of £160,000 to write-out the cost of the model yacht pond work partially off-set by increase in charges for the anticipated works to Higham's Park Lake and the cattle overwintering facilities at Great Gregories Farm.
15. The £268,000 reduction in other Grants, reimbursements and Contributions in Local Risk is mainly due to the fallout of the HLF Lottery Funding contribution as the project has come to an end, and the fallout of the Gifford Wood Grant.
16. The decrease of £94,000 in transfer from reserves is due to the reduction in capital charges reflected in paragraph 14.

17. Analysis of the movement in manpower and related staff costs are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Manpower statement	Latest Approved Budget 2014/15		Original Budget 2015/16	
	Manpower Full-time equivalent	Estimated cost £000	Manpower Full-time Equivalent	Estimated cost £000
Epping, Wanstead, Chingford, HLF, CBT	74.28	2,641	72.80	2,679
TOTAL EPPING	74.28	2,641	72.80	2,679

The reduction in manpower numbers is due to the HLF Branching Out Project finishing in 2014/15. The increase in costs is due to an allowance for pay increases and the filling of vacant posts.

Larger Variances in Services Managed (Appendix 1)

18. The £209,000 increase in the Epping division of service is mainly due to an increase in Repairs & Maintenance within the City Surveyor's Local Risk, an increase in local Risk employee costs, off-set by a reduction in non-Government Grant income due to the ending of the Gifford Wood Appeal.

Potential Further Budget Developments

19. The provisional nature of the 2015/16 revenue budget recognises that further revisions may be required, including in relation to:
- budget reductions to capture savings arising from the on-going PP2P and Service Based Reviews;
 - decisions on funding of the Additional Work Programme by the Resource Allocation Sub Committee.
 - The basis on which costs are charged under the Building Repairs and Maintenance contract is being reviewed. The present costs, which are based on a square footage basis, are to be replaced by costs relating to the individual assets of each property. The outcome of the review is likely to result in variations to the budgets that have been submitted for 2014/15 and 2015/16. The City Surveyor will report separately on any significant changes.
 - If specific service based review proposals included with this budget report are rejected by the Committee, or other Committees request that further proposals are pursued, that the substitution of other suitable

proposals for a corresponding amount is delegated to the Town Clerk in discussion with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the relevant Committee. If the substituted saving is not considered to be straight forward in nature, then the Town Clerk shall also consult the Chairman and Deputy Chairmen of the Policy and Resources Committee prior to approving an alternative proposal(s).

Revenue Budget 2014/15

20. The forecast outturn for the current year is in line with the latest approved budget of £4.770M.

Draft Capital and Supplementary Revenue Budgets

21. The latest estimated costs for the Committee's draft capital and supplementary revenue projects are summarised in the tables below.

Service Managed	Project	Exp. Pre 01/04/14	2014/15	Later Years	Total
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Pre-implementation</u>					
Epping Forest	Baldwins & Deer Sanctuary Ponds		12		12
<u>Authority to start work granted</u>					
Epping Forest	Branching Out	4,307	297		4,604
Epping Forest	Highams Park Lake	106	1,740		1,846
Epping Forest	Great Gregories Farm overwintering of cattle	16	219		235
TOTAL EPPING FOREST		4,429	2,256	0	6,685

22. Pre-implementation costs comprise feasibility/option appraisal expenditure which have been approved in accordance with the project procedure, prior to authority to start work.
23. Implementation phases of the Baldwin's & Deer Sanctuary Ponds project are planned to be carried out in 2015/16.
24. The remaining schemes have received authority to start work and are in progress.
25. The latest Capital and Supplementary Revenue Project budgets will be presented to the Court of Common Council for approval in March 2015.

Contact Officer: Mark Jarvis (1221) or Alison Elam (1081)

APPENDIX 1

Analysis by Service Managed	Actual 2013-14 £'000	Latest Approved Budget 2014-15 £'000	Original Budget 2015-16 £'000	Movement 2014-15 to 2015-16 £'000	Paragraph(s) Reference
<u>CITY CASH</u>					
Epping Forest	4,538	4,657	4,866	209	18
CBT*	0	0	0	0	
HLF	13	7	0	(7)	
Chingford Golf Course	(22)	(47)	(45)	2	
Wanstead Flats	136	153	154	1	
Woodredon & Warlies**	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL	4,665	4,770	4,975	205	

* City Bridge Trust (CBT) is a restricted fund which nets to zero.

** Any shortfall or surplus from Woodredon & Warlies is transferred to City Fund and therefore nets to zero.

APPENDIX 2

Support Services from/to Epping Forest	Actual 2013-14 £'000	Latest Approved Budget 2014-15 £'000	Original Budget 2015-16 £'000	Movement 2014-15 to 2015-16 £'000	Paragraph Reference
<u>Support Services</u>					
Central Recharges-					
City Surveyor's Employee Recharge	274	272	287	15	
Insurance	70	71	72	1	
I.S.Recharges – Chamberlain	95	81	73	(8)	
Support Services-					
Chamberlain (inc CLPS recharges)	124	110	113	3	
Comptroller and City Solicitor	69	71	68	(3)	
Town Clerk	108	110	106	(4)	
City Surveyor	87	92	92	0	
Other Services*	21	22	18	(4)	
Total Support Services	848	829	829	0	
<u>Recharges Within Fund</u>					
Directorate Recharges	169	197	206	9	
Corporate and Democratic Core	(38)	(38)	(38)	0	
Total Recharges Within Fund	131	159	168	9	
<u>Recharges Across Funds</u>					
Woodredon & Warlies	1	14	15	1	
Total Recharges Across Funds	1	14	15	1	
Total Support Services	980	1,002	1,012	10	

* Various services including central heating, corporate printing, occupational health, union costs, environmental and sustainability section.

Inspiring environmental understanding through first-hand experience



Epping Forest Field Centre Head of Centre's report on activity in 2014



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

The purpose of this report is to inform the Joint Committee of performance in relation to the delivery of the City of London's environmental learning service in Epping Forest in 2014; I recommend that the report be RECEIVED.

2014 was always going to be a challenging year with a lean staff structure and a challenging operating environment. The challenges became significantly greater with the previously reported heating issues (from January to October) together with a number of broadband drop outs, telephone outages and the loss of data from the main server. Relatively high levels of staff sickness and a greater than 50% turnover of staff heightened difficulties. In the light of this it is very pleasing to be able to report that the 2014 performance was strong especially in relation to the 'key priorities' from the 2014 Plan.

The 2014 Plan had indicated the 'need to deliver an additional 100 courses beyond those that come from repeat bookings and the normal level of new custom' (to replace courses from the externally funded projects of preceding years). Taking this into account, the 21,067 learner experiences delivered in 2014 (table 1) should be regarded as a significant achievement reflecting the huge effort made by all those that worked at the Centre during the year.

Table 1:	2013	2014
Paid for learner experiences	19,640	20,961
Subsidised learner experiences	2,664	115

The figure of 20,961 learner experiences is significantly above long term averages. It is comfortably within the 'range of 20,000 – 22,000' indicated in the 2014 Plan and exceeds the target of 20,000 from the 2011-2014 Plan. The high number of learner experiences reflects a continuation of operations at the Centre that, in term time, are pretty much at practical maximum occupancy.

'Learner experiences' reported to the JCC are taken from the FSC bookings data base. The data is produced following agreed protocols from which all invoicing and audited records are derived. The data provides a reasonably reliable indicator for year on year comparisons. It is broadly equivalent to the 'student/days' data that was reported to the Committee prior to the change to 'learner experiences'. A primary school pupil attending for a course from 10:00 am to 2:30 pm counts as a single learner experience as does an Advanced Level student attending from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. A student attending a five day course would be counted as 5 learner experiences.

FSC now uses learner hours to account for variations in course length (ie teaching contact time); it is envisaged that learner hours will be used as a significant KPI for future reporting. Learner hours in 2014 were at an all time high of 113,179 narrowly beating last year's record of 113,025.

Recognising the implications of reduced funding support, the 2014 Plan had stressed the 'need to focus more on course income and viability rather than overly focussing on high numbers of learning experiences. With this in mind, it is particularly pleasing to report the highest ever number of paying learners (table 1 above). This, together with a focus on higher income generation courses (Advanced and GCSE), led to the highest ever income generation from courses (table 2):

Table 2	2013	2014
Income from courses	£ 280,652	£297,725

The high level of income generation is reassuring. It confirms that there is a strong demand for the services provided by Epping Forest Field Centre and fosters shorter term viability. However, sustaining this level of income in the longer term may prove to be rather too challenging with pressures on staff and very limited time for development work. The ongoing support of stakeholders and the benefits from being part of the FSC London Region will be very important in the future. It is hoped that ways can be found to return to the delivery of more subsidised learning to target particular groups, pilot innovative learning provision and to achieve aims that are significantly broader than meeting the fieldwork needs of Advanced level and GCSE specifications.

Graphically the 2014 profile of learners and course income now looks like this:

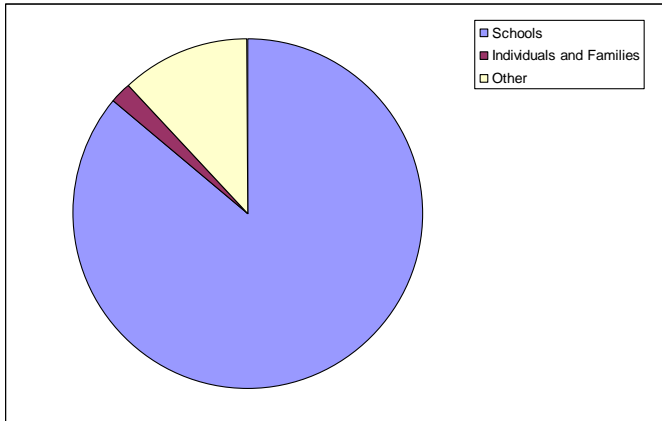


Figure 1: Percentage of learners by school / informal / other

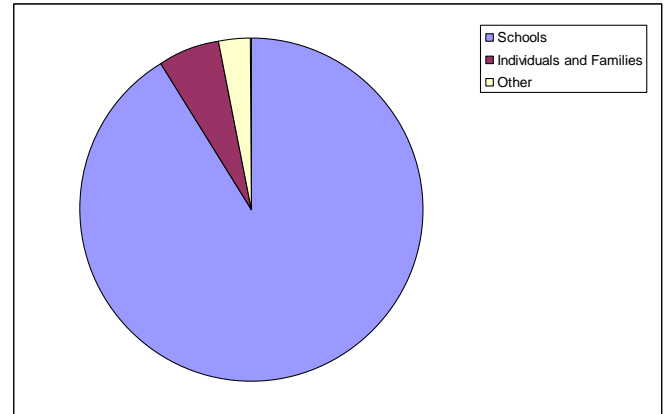


Figure 2: Percentage income by school / informal / other

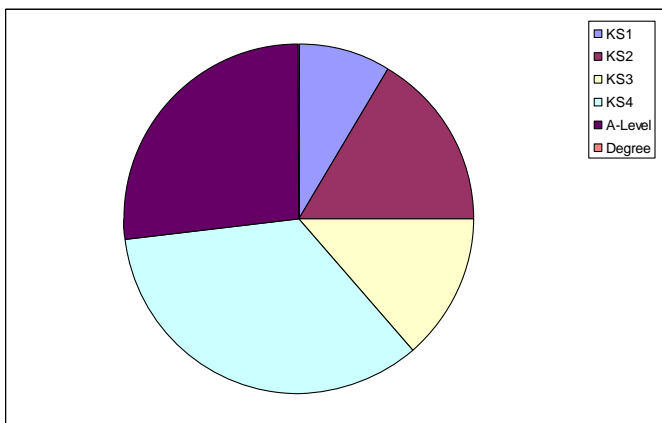


Figure 3: Percentage of school learners by Key Stage

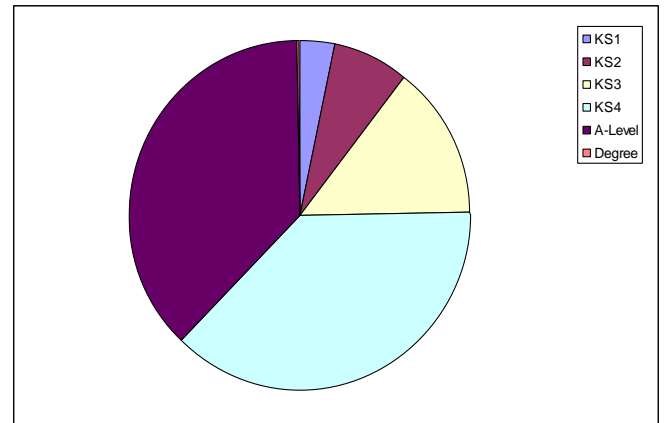
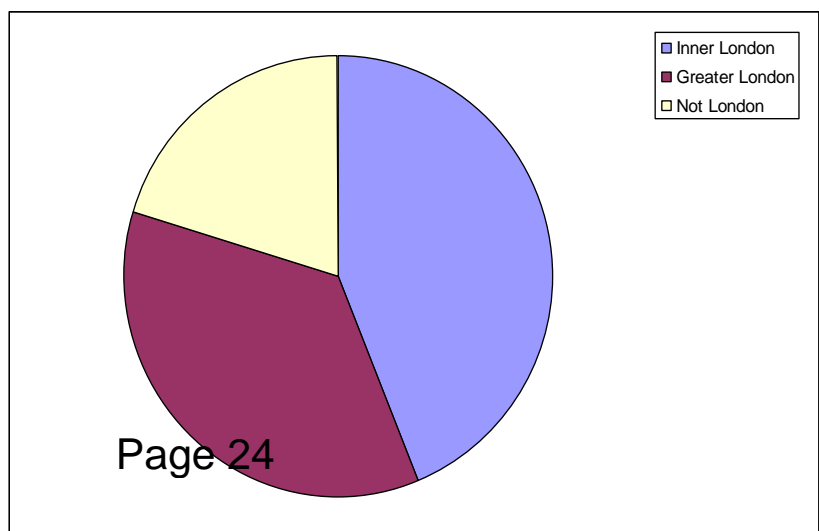


Figure 4: Percentage of school income by Key Stage

The graphical representation of the percentage splits between schools from Inner London, Greater London and beyond Greater London looks like this (figure 5):



A spreadsheet version of these graphs with the data from which they have been produced has been prepared to accompany the agenda papers sent by email

As in previous years we delivered our courses to learners of all ability levels from diverse backgrounds facilitating access and inclusion for the widest range of learners.

Feedback forms indicate that we met or exceeded expectations for **98.92%** of service users. We believe that that expectations were mainly 'exceeded'; **more than 90%** teachers rated our schools provision in the **highest** category on a 5 point scale. No complaints were received.



'Outstanding teaching leading to outstanding learning' – Teacher

'Fabulous! Outdoor learning in an amazing environment' – Teacher

'So good I came back a second time' – Adult learner

'A great learning experience for both adults and children' – Family course participant

Figure 6: Family Course (identifying freshwater invertebrates)

Maintaining and developing the FSC/City of London partnership in financially challenging times remains of crucial importance. The ongoing support for the work of EFFC from Members and Officers from both organisations is greatly appreciated. The developing FSC London Region has been welcomed as an opportunity to foster increased collaboration; reciprocal support arrangements, especially with teaching cover and interviewing, have been enhanced.

Six members of our team left in 2014, one having been with us for ten years and another for six years. The demand for induction training and for coaching inevitably increased with the arrival of new colleagues. This was used as an opportunity to foster the continuous development of services and systems of work. During the summer holidays a series of workshops took place to share best practice and to disseminate knowledge about courses and sites. We ensured that outputs of volunteering achieved very useful impacts through effective task allocation and mentor support. I am most grateful to all those who give up their valuable time to support the work of the Centre.

The Centre continues to be generally well maintained by the City and its contractors. However the breakdown of the boilers in January 2014 and the use of not entirely adequate temporary heating created a number of challenges through to October including overloaded electrical circuits. Conditions improved after the City's contractors installed new boilers and made them operational (subject to snagging, completion of peripheral works and final commissioning) from October onwards.

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

Of particular note in 2014 was:

- hosting a webinar for SEEd on 'Biodiversity in the new Science Primary Curriculum'
- delivery of a workshop for 15 trainee teachers from the Consortium for School Centred Initial Teacher Training (West Essex)
- delivery of a 'Biology in the New curriculum' workshop for teachers
- a new ICT related adult course 'Wildlife in the Cloud'
- an article relating to curriculum change published in 'Primary Science'

- production of short stop motion animation videos using ‘rushes’ taken by staff and children

The Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre membership has steadily increased and now stands at **over 1,000** compared to 763 in 2013. An Action Plan was approved at the Associates’ AGM on 1 December. This Plan should continue the transformation of the Associates into an increasingly active community-based organisation to promote and raise funds for the Centre and to be a focal point for volunteering. In 2014 the Associates celebrated 21 years of supporting the Centre. The Associates secured £500 to fund Summer SEN sessions in 2015, funded a Winter Wonderland session and also secured a donation of paint. Associate member Anna Galbraith rode in Ride London 100 to raise funds for the work of the Associates.

Our ‘Learning for Biodiversity for Londoners’ project that had been initiated in 2011 came to an end with the submission of the final project report to the funders, the City Bridge Trust (CBT). Tim Wilson, Principal Grants and Social Investment Officer, for City Bridge Trust wrote:



‘It was a comprehensive and extremely well prepared report. The appendices were very informative and it was evident that this has been a popular programme. EFFC clearly has good data capture systems in place. The photos really helped bring the report to life. Thanks to all involved for the time and care taken – the hard work done on the project and the report came across well’.

In December 2014 Keep Britain Tidy renewed our Eco-Centre Award. This award recognised our commitment to careful management and continuous improvement of impacts upon the environment and also the promotion of learning for sustainability in recent years. Key features in our evidence portfolio included the *Lessons from Nature* project and the *Learning for Biodiversity for Londoners* project and also the installation of solar tubes, movement activated lights and push taps when the toilets were refurbished in 2013.



Figure 7: An OWL Electricity monitor (installed for trials in December 2014) will be used to collect energy usage data.



Figure 8: Monitoring of the bin usage accuracy* revealed that this was significantly more accurate for students where more sophisticated looking purpose designed bins were provided. This led to budgeting for a rollout of the new bins to all classrooms in 2015. [*landfill and recycling separation by students from the same schools in different classrooms].



The financial performance in 2014 was much better than anticipated with the exceptionally high level of course income and with some CBT funding reaching the account a little later than had been anticipated at the time of budget forecasting in September 2013. In summary, operations in 2014 were efficient, economic and highly effective with the delivery of a very significant number of high quality and well received learning experiences.

Table 3: Income & Expenditure Account Heading	2013 Actual (JCC 14 May 2014)	2014 Estimates (JCC 9 Oct 2013)	2014 Actual (JCC 15 May 2015)	Notes
Course income	£280,652	£285,000	£297,725	especially from A level and GCSE courses
Grants	£21,292	£6,800	£24,953	final part of City Bridge Trust funding of Biodiversity Project
Other	£18,248	£20,000	£21,785	includes charges for staff time, sales, hire of facilities and rent received from residential staff
Investment fund	£2,611	£2,500	£2,731	
Sub total	£322,803	£314,300	£347,174	
City of London payment	£52,752	£52,752	£52,752	
TOTAL INCOME	£375,555	£367,052	£399,946	
Salaries	£266,724	£276,000	£273,414	staff turnover led to some cost reduction
Training	£414	£500	£935	staff turnover led to increased costs
Heat and light	£13,373	£11,500	£10,307	reduced oil, increased electricity, inadequate heating
Insurance	£7,465	£8,700	£6,708	
Transport	£2,637	£2,500	£2,218	
Library and equipment	£3,192	£2,500	£3,082	individual investigations increased demands
Food	£3,710	£3,500	£2,809	
Cleaning	£1,375	£1,300	£1,679	unexpected repair of floor scrubber and purchase of recycling bins for trial (Eco Centre action)
Uniform	£301	£100	£303	staff turnover led to increased costs
Premises, furniture, estate	£1,975	£1,500	£1,890	unexpected washing machine repairs and purchase of heavy duty microwave
Admin	£10,708	£10,000	£8,550	
Rates and water	£6,862	£7,800	£6,732	
Depreciation	£816	£1,050	£646	
Total Operating Costs	£319,552	£326,950	£319,273	
FSC Central Costs (includes auditing, HR, marketing and promotion)	£48,833	£45,773	£45,773	
Total Operating Expenditure	£368,385	£372,723	£365,046	
Operating Surplus/Deficit	£7,170	-£5,671	£34,900	

Notes:

These figures exclude maintenance costs borne by City of London. The figures in the 2014 Estimates column are those that were approved by the Joint Consultative Committee on 9 October 2013. The figures in the 2014 Actual column have been agreed with the FSC Director of Finance to reflect the figures in FSC's audited accounts.

'2014 income has grown to within a nudge of £400,000 with particular growth in course income. It is very encouraging see that costs have been held not only within budget but also to a lower level than 2013'
(Comment from FSC Director of Finance on the final 2014 figures).

A spreadsheet version of this income & expenditure is also being sent to JCC members with the agenda papers sent by email

Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee

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 Epping Forest Field Centre activity in 2015

The purpose of this report is to inform the Joint Committee of performance in relation to the delivery of the City of London's environmental learning service in Epping Forest in 2015; I recommend that the report be RECEIVED.

Providing diverse, accessible and valuable high quality provision

A wide range of courses designed to encourage lifelong enjoyment of, and care for, the Forest and the natural world, was delivered in 2015. Once again this was to very diverse economic and ethnic/social groups with more than half of the Centre's audience coming from the City and Greater London. The profile was very similar to that illustrated in the report on 2014. Increased promotion of Epping Forest as 'a wonderful place for discovery and learning' and raising service user awareness of the City/FSC partnership was an increasingly important theme in 2015. (This will be extended to *Family* courses in 2016).

New courses for adult learners in 2016 included *Woodland and Forest Bird Song* and *Wildlife Photography with Birds of Prey*. Subsidised learners in 2016 comprised:

- the third annual 'Loughton Big Family Pond Dip' 'taking learning to the learners' and connecting families with their local part of EF (funded by Loughton Town Council)
- a *Key Stage 4 Visitor Impact* day for Forest Gate school students (funded by FSC Bursary)
- a family Bioblitz event (funded by the Associates of EFFC)
- a *Summer Wonderland* SEN event (funded by Haslers accountancy firm).

Performance data and Income & Expenditure

Indicator	2013	2014	2015
Paid for learner experiences #	19,640	20,961	19,480
Subsidised learner experiences #	2,664	115	114
Learners	20,590	18,470	17,200
Income from courses	£ 280,652	£297,725	£292, 923
Meeting or exceeding expectations of service users	99.2%	98.9%	99.6%
Increasing environmental understanding	97.8%	98.8%	99.2%

Some learners come on more than one day eg separate adult courses or a five day A level course

The financial outturn will be broadly in line with the 2015 estimates that were accepted by the JCC in 2014. It is anticipated that the final audited accounts will be available in April/May 2016. In the interim indicative 2015 figures are presented with the 2016 estimates for contextualisation in a following report.

Developing networks, partnerships and support

The Centre continues to benefit from ever strengthening mutual support across the FSC London Region and continues to participate in the Epping Forest Learning Providers Forum with colleagues from the City, Centenary Trust and Suntrap.

In March, following the inaugural courses last year, we delivered a second geography fieldwork course for the Consortium for the School Centred Initial Teacher Training (Essex) with 16 trainee teachers in attendance. In May we held a 'Teacher Advisory Group' meeting; a focus group of education professionals volunteering their time to support development at EFFC. It was very helpful and we hope to repeat this in 2017.

The Centre continues to maintain very good community links. There is ongoing dialogue with several local networks and organisations to explore opportunities that might help to develop and sustain FSC's work in Epping Forest. The Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre membership continues to build and we have worked effectively with the Associates to foster support for the work of the Centre. We have collaborated locally on a funded project that, if successful, will deliver a range of activities, including 'well being walks' and natural arts/video/photo exhibitions for young people and adults with special needs.

Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) currently parks its community transport minibus at the Centre when it is not use. VAEF benefits from free parking and reduced risk of vandalism. EFFC benefits from a very visible commitment to working in partnership and with the community and from the ability to use this vehicle free of charge for adult courses where transport is required which supports customer care and carbon reduction.

Volunteer recruitment continues with help from VAEF with 11 regular, active volunteers supporting us in 2015.

Meeting the challenges of curriculum change.

EFFC learning provision closely reflects the new Curriculum as well as incorporating resources and pedagogies trialed in our *Learning for Biodiversity*, *Discovering Epping Forest* and *Lessons from Nature* projects. Provision for secondary schools has been carefully thought through following very active participation in FSC training at national, regional and local level. The team is very confident that it is well prepared to meet the challenges of curriculum change. Teachers have offered range responses in relation to what curriculum reform means in terms of future use of EFFC services with some very positive, a few negative and some with a fair amount uncertainty.

Microscopes

Ken Adams, longstanding Associate Tutor, very generously donated £9,000 (plus gift aid) to purchase high spec microscopes for FSC Epping Forest. Ken has recognised that, whilst this sort of specialist equipment has been impossible to fund in other ways in recent years, it is crucial to maintaining the capabilities and reputation of EFFC to host advanced level taxonomic courses. This is hugely appreciated and will make a crucial difference to ensuring that proper taxonomic learning remains a very important and permanent part of the ongoing provision of this Centre. These will be used for advanced taxonomic courses and for specific microscopy courses. Our older lower spec microscopes can now be used more sacrificially to add value to more existing courses.

Fire Risk Assessment

As part of FSC's Charity wide risk management strategy, Fire Safety Consultant, Jamie Davis, undertook a follow up fire risk assessment (FRA) on 29 April along the lines of the 2012 FRA reported to the Committee. No significant unmanaged risks to life were identified. City contractors have largely addressed the key remedial action points.

ICT

The acquisition of iPads from the beginning of 2015 has helped with productivity, collecting and sharing digital images, using social media and, most importantly, enhancing learning and teaching. David Morgan

(FSC Technology in Learning Officer) visited EFFC in May to observe teaching and advise on ICT use to support learning. David was able to provide some tips on how we can use our existing technology resources and has offered us, on long term loan, a class set of tablets to trial FNS (Field Network Systems) to support data collection in the field.

Quality Badge Plus and Eco Centre accreditation

In June the Centre was assessed for Quality Badge Plus – the summary report is included as an appendix.

Eco-Centre accreditation at the end of December 2014 (and the QB + assessment) confirms ongoing action and progress relating to the management of the environmental impacts of the Centre's operations and to supporting the development of positive attitudes and behaviour in relation to Epping Forest and the natural world.

Preparedness for the future

The Centre will enter 2016 in with a very strong client base and has the capabilities to continue to meet or exceed expectations. Maintaining this base, alongside exploring new income opportunities, will be vital in ensuring that EFFC operations are sustainable.

Steve Bunce, Head of Centre

020 8502 8500

stevebunce.ef@field-studies-council.org

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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 Financial Estimates

The following financial estimates are presented to the Committee FOR ACCEPTANCE.

The City of London payment has been estimated at £50,773 this being the 2015 level with a 5% reduction from 1 April 2016, as per information provided by the Superintendent. Income generation from course fees is targeted to rise above £300,000 for the first time. This significant level of revenue funds the delivery of the high quality environmental learning service in Epping Forest based on the assumptions and intended actions in the Epping Forest Field Centre 2016 Plan (preceding agenda item).

Account Heading	2015 Estimates as previously submitted to JCC	2016 Estimates as at December 2015	% Change From 2015 estimate to 2016 estimate	2015 'Actual' For reference #
Teaching	£305,000	£303,500	0%	£293,217
Grants, sponsorship & restricted funds	£0	£3,000		£9,265
Others (staff rent, hire, professional services, sales)	£20,000	£27,575	38%	£22,207
Investment fund	£2,500	£2,800	12%	£2,833
Sub total	£327,500	£336,875	3%	£327,522
City of London Funding	£52,752	£50,773	-4%	£52,752
Total EFFC Income	£380,252	£387,648	2%	£380,274
Salaries & associate tutor costs	£276,000	£286,000	4%	£273,737
Training	£500	£600	20%	£675
Heating & lighting	£11,500	£12,400	8%	£12,500
Insurance	£9,000	£8,340	-7%	£7751
Transport	£2,100	£2,500	19%	£2,571
Library & equipment	£6,000	£3,550	-41%	£6038
Food	£4,700	£4,500	-4%	£3920
Cleaning	£1,500	£1,800	20%	£2692
Uniform	£200	£400	100%	£465
Premises, furniture & estate	£2,400	£2,290	-5%	£2,638
Administration	£10,000	£7,378	-26%	£7,616
Rates & water	£8,000	£7,476	-7%	£7,392
Depreciation	£1,100	£522	-53%	£1,205
FSC central costs reduced to 12% in 2016	£46,620	£40,531	-13%	£43,187
Total Expenditure	£379,620	£378,287	0%	£372,387
Operating Surplus/ Deficit	£632	£9,361		£7,887

Account Heading	Notes relating 2016 estimates
Course income	<p>Whilst 2015 course income is below the ambitious estimate. It is second best ever year total for course fees income. (FSC accounts show 2011 as higher but this includes grant funded places). The shortfall 2014 and 2015 estimate arose from staff turnover which reduced peak period teaching capacity (fully trained tutors). This was compounded by exceptionally reduced class sizes at the start of the 2015/16 academic year when provisional bookings were confirmed. The 2016 estimate assumes that misfortune elements will not re-occur in 2016 and that additional actions can help to mitigate against the negative impacts of high levels of class size reduction. It would be an all time record for course fees but was considered to be realistic and achievable at the time of budget preparation in Autumn 2015.</p> <p>Adult course income is predicted to be stable matching 2015 income £18.8k with families/children income targeted to rise by 2.8K to £9k with a detailed plan to move this income back towards past levels.</p> <p>The breadth of provision buffers this course fees income target in relation to negative impacts on any one of the niche markets.</p>
Grants and sponsors (including restricted funds)	Some of this can be drawn in from current funds of the Associates and it is likely that additional funding will be generated in 2016
Other (including sales, hire, rent, charging for staff time)	This increase reflects increases in the amount that staff pay for accommodation at the Centre
Investment fund	Based on 2015 income from this fund as at the end of October
City of London Payment	1 st qtr 2016 @ 2015 level with a 5% reduction April – Dec
Salaries	The estimate makes allowance for increases arising from legislative/regulatory/pensions changes together with incremental increases (subject to performance) for all staff except Head of Centre and for the continuation of the fixed term Administrator post
Training	Having relatively new staff increases costs
Heating & lighting	Gas £2.92k (5% inc) Electricity £6k (cost increase offset by reduced consumption) Oil £3.5K
Insurance	Based on revised estimates for 2015 costs with a 3% rise factored in
Transport	Having relatively new staff increases costs of travel for training
Library & equipment	Unlike 2015 there will be no additional teaching Ipads from this budget in 2016 unless there is extra income to fund this
Food & other course costs	2015 actual and planning indicates a small reduction
Cleaning	Unlike 2015 there will be no new recycling bins
Uniform	Uniform needs for new staff has increased costs
Premises, furniture and estate	2016 includes £1.3K for landfill & recycle waste and £0.3K for (grounds) equipment hire & use
Admin	This reflects cost controls except for essential ICT increases with modest reductions for reduced PDQ (credit card) costs and savings from Version One (expenditure processing software) use in place of postage
Rates & water	This appears to an accurate forecast based on a review of actual charges and includes 1% inc for Council Tax
Depreciation	In 2015 we disposed of 'Fixed Assets' (dated scientific equipment) to the value of £486. It is unlikely that this will be repeated in 2016 so the estimate is for depreciation of current assets only.
FSC HO costs	Reducing by 1% per annum (from 14% to 11%) as per FSC Director of Finance statement at the October 2014 meeting
# Note relating to the 2015 'Actual' estimates	
<p>The 2015 'actual' figures are being presented two months earlier than the normal time frame. Whilst they are likely to be very close to the final outturn they may be subject to some accounting adjustments, as well as audit, prior to finalisation. For this reason they are not intended as a formal statement of financial performance. They have been included primarily to guide Members in considering the 2016 I&E.</p>	

Epping Forest Joint Consultative Committee

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 Epping Forest Field Centre Plan for 2016

The following 2016 Epping Forest Field Centre Plan is presented to the Committee FOR APPROVAL.

Epping Forest Field Centre (EFFC) 2016 Plan

This overview Plan comprises:

- Background
- Objectives
- 2016 income and expenditure estimates – presented to the JCC in a following paper
- Aspirations and ideas for development

EFFC has been managed by FSC for, and on behalf of, the City of London from its establishment in 1971. The Centre promotes Epping Forest as '*a wonderful place for discovery and learning*'. Learning experiences at EFFC are designed to encourage lifelong enjoyment of, and care for, the Forest and the natural world. Careful evaluation, undertaken with external funding in previous years, has shown that EFFC's learning provision for schools achieves these aims and also boosts attainment.

The Centre will enter 2016 with a very strong client base mainly from (Greater) London and has the capabilities to continue to meet or exceed expectations. Maintaining this base, alongside exploring new income opportunities, will be vital in ensuring that EFFC operations are sustainable. Flexibility and diversity of provision have been crucial in making progress at EFFC in the past. They will remain important factors in the light of the ongoing impacts of curriculum reform, the evolving plans of the FSC London Region and changes in City funding and this is reflected in this Plan. Curriculum reform has brought new challenges but there is cause for optimism including stated teacher intentions to return in 2016 and a reported increase of 13% uptake in Advanced level Geography. Curriculum reform brings opportunities for non-residential course provision. Further background detail and evaluation that informs this Plan is contained in a range of documents – please ask the Head of Centre if you wish to view these.

Analysis indicates that

- a record level of course income is achievable in 2016 with costs and resources broadly in line with those of 2014 and 2015
- further cost cutting would reduce income generation capacity and surplus

Risk management **in 2016** will focus on:

- maintaining excellent standards of health & safety, child protection and operations to maintain the reputation of the Centre and stakeholders
- ensuring the financial viability of core services and maintaining flexibility and a wide range of services to cope with changes to the operating environment and markets
- providing excellent customer care, optimise repeat visits/referrals
- maintaining continuous improvement and responding imaginatively to challenges/opportunities
- ensuring sensible exit strategies for any new developments/projects utilising external grants

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. As at December 2015 the new staff team was very positive about its ability to deliver this Plan.

Our objectives for 2016

Extending Opportunities:

- Reach 17,000 (non-residential) learners delivering 20,000 learner experiences to diverse audiences (BME, EAL and 'free schools meals' students) that are predominantly from London

Integrated Networks with access to all:

- Collaborate to build the cohesion within FSC London Region and its connectivity with other FSC Units and Regions.

Inspire through quality support resources:

- Utilise our continuous improvement processes to ensure high quality courses and resources and continue the development of web content
- Maintain the Centre grounds for wildlife, learning and enjoyment and transform the raised beds

Exceed or match the expectations of >90% of customers:

- Benchmark service user feedback against 2015 data and continue to exceed the FSC KPI for meeting needs and continue to address any issues identified as part of current practices
- Ensure that our learning provision continues to engender enjoyment and discovery learning, consistently adopts best practice (including QB plus improvement points – notably a high pace of learning and effective AfL for all learners) and meet changing demands from schools
- Ensure compliance and continue to meet 100% of the requirements of the 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
- Collaborate effectively with City of London officers in relation to maintenance of the facilities and improvements to environmental impacts and the improvement of the toilet facilities for adults where feasible
- Address, as appropriate, the improvement points from the QB plus report (as per Appendix B)
- Use Poll Daddy software to improve data collection and evaluation from service users
- Make specific reference to Quality Badge improvement points in Quarterly reports to FSC HO

Overcoming barriers to First hand experiences:

- Regain momentum with the use of social media and increase followers, continuously improve web content and ensure that we continue to increase web 'hits' (with search engine optimisation)
- 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

Partnerships with others:

- Collaborate effectively with the City of London to ensure optimal short, medium and long term support
- 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
- Respond effectively to any new protocols for reporting to JCC, Head of Region and to FSC at Corporate level (QB plus improvement point)
- Collaborate with Stakeholders to develop a clearly articulated dynamic long-term vision future for the Centre to build upon the evolving aspirations and planning frames of the City and of the FSC London Region (QB plus improvement point)

Ability to Invest for the future:

- Constrain expenditure and achieve forecast income including £300,000 in course income
- 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 including the utilisation of the new potentially income generating 'Official Sponsor' category of membership

Environmental/Greening the Business:

- Maintain our commitment to the effective management of our environmental impacts, (keeping this on the agenda for the weekly staff meeting, and continue to explore PIRs and LEDs as part of our strategy to reduce carbon emissions)

Staff Training and personal development:

- *Develop and deliver a Learning and Development Plan that ensures compliance, develops capability and underpins the effective delivery of this plan and meets the standards of IIP*

These broad Objectives are underpinned by three Key Area Plans (Learning Provision, Systems Plan and Communications) and by supporting Theme Plans and Personal Action Plans that contain significantly more detail and refer to staff allocation, prioritisation, timescales, resource allocation, measurement and learning and development needs. A detailed Action Plan has also been accepted by the Head of FSC London Region for inclusion in the Regional Action Plan.

Aspirations and ideas for development

There is a pressing need to focus on the current viability of core business and to ensure the future viability of the Centre. Flexibility is important in relation to development work. There is an aspiration to make good use of the Centre's heritage, resources and emerging ideas by exploring some of the ideas below in 2016 and beyond. However they do not form part of the core Plan. There is little point spending considerable time on the things that are not going to ensure viability, especially when efficiency savings made in recent years leave a very tight budget. For these reasons no specific expenditure/resource has been allocated for these developments. Precisely what is attempted and achieved will depend upon resource availability and dynamic prioritisation accounting for reputation and viability.

Development

- Find new ways to foster the longstanding FSC/City of London partnership
- Collaborate with City colleague to identify how we can do more to showcase Epping Forest as a special place with special features
- Give some additional attention to Family courses – schools provision has been our focus in recent years (as stated in plans); we hope to find time to make these courses more vibrant
- Seek additional funding that would take forward aspirations for 'inspired by Epping Forest' (arts) provision
- Make a step change in the use of ICT in the field and move EFFC to being 'leading edge' in this area
- Establish a 'You Tube' channel for movie content relating to our learning provision
- Continue to explore the possible provision of new features in the Centre's grounds (viewing platform, low ropes course, improved access to wheelchair path and pond complex) - subject to permissions and feasibility
- Explore PIRs and LEDs as part of our strategy to reduce carbon emissions

Build on Project legacies

Take forward the legacies (courses & resources, pedagogies, operating systems, learning sites, audiences, partnerships) from 'Sustainable Schools', 'Lessons from Nature', 'Learning for Biodiversity for Londoners' and 'Discovering Epping Forest' in core work and in new projects that might include:

- link more of our learning outcomes to learning for the Forest and the natural world and from the Forest and the natural world to inform thinking about how products and production systems could work better in the human world
- significantly increasing biological monitoring and recording and the utilisation of this important data
- provide learning and development relating to survey and monitoring techniques
- generate citizen science to help inform forest management contribute to ispot, OPAL and BIG DATA
- acquire additional microscopes build EFFC's reputation for microscopy/taxonomy
- build on EFFC's reputation for freshwater ecology, biodiversity and taxonomic learning at all levels
- ensure the conservation of the existing ponds at EFFC and the habitats of the very significant populations of great crested newts (as per the reports of Dr Laurence Jarvis) for ecological reasons and to ensure that we have an outdoor classroom for teaching freshwater ecology and sustaining teaching activities (KPI)
- create an additional pond (or pond complex) at the Centre
- continue to offer amphibian courses to professionals, families, university students, school students
- offer a new pond discovery course developed for 'DEF 2'
- extend use of our Field Network Systems (FNS) -connectivity for data recording, presentation analysis in the field and for contributing to the collation of 'big data' at UK level

Galvanising external support/ engaging the commercial sector

Allied to ongoing improvements in marketing (content marketing, increased web and social media activity, video clips, customer relationship management, whole staff engagement and highlighting signposting the City visits fund and FSC Bursaries) there is an aspiration to develop development EFFC support network. Building towards the 50th anniversary of the Centres operations in 2021, the intention is to raise the profile of EFFC especially with the commercial sector. We hope to galvanise existing and new supporters to accelerate this.

It is hoped that Eleanor Laing, MP has agreed to launch and to promote a new 'Official Sponsor of the Associates of Epping Forest Field Centre' membership category of EFFC's supporter group.

At just £120 pa we hope that Official Sponsor membership will be attractive. Official Sponsors will be able to use the Associates logo & statement and to display a certificate. They will also be referenced on the Associates website, on a poster in the EFFC entrance hall and on social media. Official Sponsors could be families, individuals or organisations but the key target is the commercial sector.

The intention is to find ways to exceed the expectations of those that become Official Sponsors, foster mutually valuable partnerships and enlist new advocates. This is part of a wider aspiration for EFFC to engage more fully with businesses to offer:

- Marketing and publicity opportunities aligned to sponsorship that could provide excellent value for money returns from existing commercial sector marketing budgets
- Corporate social responsibility opportunities
- Workforce learning experiences (corporate fun days, team building, workforce CSR events, workforce environmental learning experiences and learning and development for management and for sustainability)
- Partnership working in relation to business and community links (wider community, school and family outreach or Centre based learning activities)
- Venue hire

Engaging the commercial sector is potentially the best prospect for EFFC to generate additional net income to sustain its activities in its second half century.

Recommendation

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

Contact:

Steve Bunce
020 8502 8500
stevebunce.ef@field-studies-council.org



NAME OF THE PROVIDER FSC EPPING FOREST
Assessment dates 10th – 11th June 2015
External Assessor Jane Woodall
Peer Assessor Andy Pratt HoC FSC Slapton Ley

SUMMARY OF LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM QUALITY BADGE PLUS CRITERIA

Key indicator	Components	Met	Very Good	Outstanding
	3g Progress and achievement of students		✓	
	3h How well the provider supports the current national agenda within education and youth sectors			✓
	3i Quality of teaching and learning		✓	
	3j The suitability and rigour of assessment		✓	
	3k How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of students			✓
5. The provider meets the needs of users	5e Effectiveness and efficiency of leadership and management		✓	
7. Overall effectiveness and efficiency	7a Improvement since last evaluation		✓	
	7b Overall effectiveness		✓	

THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CENTRE

Epping Forest Field Studies Centre is very good provider.

FSC Epping Forest is a residential centre with the following strengths:

- An excellent location at the heart of Epping Forest, close to London and other major centres of population with excellent road, overland rail and London Underground transport links.
- An experienced, long-serving Head of Centre (HoC) who is passionate about environmental learning and what the Centre has to offer to visitors, stakeholders and the local community.
- A safe and strongly inclusive, caring ethos, which places a high priority on the enjoyment and wellbeing of all visitors.
- Excellent learning opportunities in the Centre grounds complemented by direct access to numerous high quality field sites in Epping Forest, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation, with a variety of urban settlements within easy reach. More than 70% of the provision is delivered within easy walking distance of the Centre, which is a real bonus for a day centre.
- Friendly, enthusiastic, well-qualified Education Team Members (ETMs), guided by very competent senior education staff who take great care to ensure that all students, including those with DSEN, or from very diverse cultures and visitors from urban backgrounds who may have very little prior experience of learning in the outdoors, can learn effectively in an environment where they feel welcome and supported.
- A very strong reputation for delivering high quality day courses to support the National Curriculum for all abilities from KS1 to KS4 and examinations at GCSE and A level. Senior ETMs have a good understanding of proposed curriculum reform and changes to examination specifications.
- A varied and well-regarded programme for adult learners.
- Clearly delegated responsibilities supported by clear structures, operational systems and effective communication. These provide a framework which enables the Centre's staff to work well as a team, processing applications from and teaching 3000 visitors each year.

- A culture that encourages continuous development. Senior and less experienced ETMs are encouraged to be innovative. They are enthusiastic about exploring new ideas and use feedback from teachers to inform developments in teaching and learning.
- A wide range of high quality, differentiated resources developed to support students' different learning styles and abilities, including those with DSEN.
- A developing use of ICT focused on using mobile technology in the field.
- A strong commitment to professional development.
- A growing understanding of the principles and practice underpinning effective assessment for learning.
- A strong eco ethos embedded in all aspects of the Centre's operation. The Centre was re-accredited as an Eco-Centre in December 2014.
- An attractive, up to date and easy to navigate website which includes comprehensive guidance for visiting staff and other adults such as parents and carers on how to support learning effectively during the visit.
- A committed group of volunteers who are inducted and trained before being deployed to good effect to support learning and other functions at the Centre.
- Strong and well established community involvement, including long-term partnerships with a range of organisations and volunteers that embed the Centre in the wider network for sustainability.
- Very positive feedback from teachers, and adult learners, which has secured a deservedly high reputation reflected in high occupancy rates and repeat bookings.

Epping Forest Field Centre is not yet outstanding because:

- Staff changes in the last two years have resulted in the breakup of an experienced education team. ETMs new to Epping Forest have needed time to get established and learn how to undertake their about their job roles effectively.
- The quality of teaching is not less than good but requires further improvements to raise education provision overall to a consistently outstanding standard.
- New ETMs need time to learn about field sites on and near the Centre in order to maximise the opportunities for learning about the natural environment and sustainable development in local environments and to make links to different scales.
- Newly appointed ETMs need access to targeted CPD, which builds on the initial verification process, to develop their teaching skills to support and challenge learners across the age and ability range.
- The approach to Assessment for Learning (AfL) and the use of personalised learning objectives is not yet consistent throughout the Centre, and does not meet the needs of all levels of ability.
- ETMs do not always provide sufficiently detailed feedback to students by focusing on reviewing the key learning points for each session and explaining what individuals need to do to improve.
- The development of a London Region vision and structure combined with uncertainty about future priorities for the City of London are frustrating long term strategic planning for EFFC.
- Newly appointed managers at EFFC need time to work with colleagues based at other learning locations to understand the national and regional education offer and ways of maximising the strengths of the different centres in London in developing and delivering courses linked to the new curriculum.
- Although the HoC is very enthusiastically encouraging ETMs to adopt technology in 2015, the use of ICT to support learning is not yet fully realised, in part because the infrastructure needs upgrading and also because the potential of the investment in iPads and other mobile technology needs to be developed and extended to enhance learning opportunities.
- The relevance of the skills and competences being taught at EFFC to future study or to employment are not sufficiently highlighted.
- Insufficient use is made of feedback from students to guide developments that can contribute to further improvement in service quality.

What FSC Epping Forest needs to prioritise to improve further:

To focus leadership and management on:

1. Using the EFFC's comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems to:

- Inform continued collaboration with stakeholders and the Head of Region to develop a clearly articulated dynamic long - term vision for the future of the EFFC in a regional context, which

continues to stretch targets for visitor numbers, maintains the Centre's strong eco ethos and includes the innovative use of ICT;

- Provide clarity about how the outcomes from monitoring and evaluation, including data in the Management Information System, is used to identify future priorities;
- Streamline key quantitative aspects of action planning and reporting on the Centre to assist interpretation and comparison;
- Re-establish a more consistent system to improve the capture of feedback from students to guide developments that can contribute to further improvement in service quality;
- Assess the use of any new investment in ICT to enhance the innovative use of ICT in all aspects of the Centre's work, including education, administration and finance.

2. Supporting continuous improvement in teaching and learning by:

- Ensuring that groups of all ages maintain a high pace of learning during the visit through:
 - providing challenge for more able students and appropriate support for less able learners;
 - ensuring that language and text used for younger age groups reflects and meets the needs of their abilities;
 - refining ways of using differentiated resources to more effectively support the learning of students of all abilities.
- Developing a consistent approach to Assessment for Learning (AfL) throughout the Centre that enables students, tutors and visiting teachers to track progress more effectively. This should include:
 - modifying the use of assessment resources to make them accessible to all levels of ability;
 - using personalised learning objectives to ensure that students can learn at an individual pace;
 - increasing the impact of feedback from tutors to students by focusing on reviewing the key learning points for each session and explaining what individuals need to do to improve.
- Enhancing understanding of the natural environment and sustainable development by creating opportunities for students to understand the specific local environments and make links to different scales.
- Drawing on Head Office support to improve the infrastructure to realise the exciting potential of using ICT to enhance learning at Epping Forest by building up expertise in the use of digital technologies inside and outside the classroom.
- Continuing to work with national and regional colleagues to develop and deliver courses linked to the new curriculum.

3. Further improve accommodation and resources by:

- Taking action in the grounds to improve first impressions, transform the raised beds and maximise the messages relating to sustainability.
- Continuing to press the City to improve the toilet facilities for adults.

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