

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>	<b>Item no.</b>
Epping Forest Joint Consultative	20 April 2012	
<b>Subject:</b> Epping Forest Field Study Centre – Outcome of Building Condition Survey	<b>Public</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Superintendent of Epping Forest	<b>For Information</b>	
<p><b><u>Summary</u></b></p> <p>This report seeks to inform your Committee of the findings of a Building Condition Survey of the Epping Forest Field Study Centre. The survey was commissioned by the City Surveyor in October 2009 to highlight the extent of internal and external repairs that the EFFSC required. The report also provides information on current and projected maintenance expenditure. The report also, summarises maintenance spending of £33,059 in 2011/12, together with plans to invest a further £154,350 in 2013/14 and £53,800 in 2014/15.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>It is recommended that this report be received for information</p>		

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. Since 1970 the City of London Corporation, acting as the Conservators of Epping Forest, has provided Environmental Education Classrooms and staff accommodation at the Field Studies Centre, High Beach as part of an agreement to support an educational partnership with the Field Studies Council (FSC).
2. The above agreement also established that the building would be provided rent free and that the City of London would be responsible for maintaining the building. A proposal to value this contribution was considered by your committee on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2011.
3. In October 2009, the City Surveyor commissioned a Building Condition Survey by Stace Construction and Property Consultants. The findings of this survey have not previously been reported to committee.

4. The Field Studies Centre, the 'High Beach Environmental Education and Research Campus' currently consists of 6 permanent buildings:
  - i. The Qvist Building – this teaching and research block provides teaching and ancillary office accommodation with net internal area of 5,236 sq ft.
  - ii. The Timber Hut Classroom
  - iii. Boot and Oil Store
  - iv. 'Ravensmead' – Residential Accommodation Block – consisting of 6 bedrooms, 5 ensuite, with shared kitchen, living room, dining room and drying room and has a gross internal area of 1,582 sq ft
  - v. 'Buxton' - 2-bed detached Bungalow measuring c. 635 sq ft
  - vi. 'Harting' - 2 bed detached Bungalow measuring c. 1,591 sq ft.

### **Summary of Building Condition Survey**

5. The Inspection revealed that generally, the buildings are in reasonable condition and housekeeping has been undertaken to a good standard with exception of some communal areas of Ravensmead (Hostel) for which a regime of cleaning is required.
6. The survey notes that externally the buildings are in good condition apart from the detached garage at Buxton, which requires replacement. Recent improvements include pitched roofs which were installed in 1998, with many of the windows being replaced approximately 12 years ago. External decorations to entire complex were completed in 2010.
7. Internally ad hoc repairs and replacements have been undertaken over the years, however there are a number of areas/items which require attention such as toilets, insulation, mould growth which visually mar the buildings and in some instances are unhygienic and could be detrimental to health. The whole complex requires internal decorations but the report notes that the responsibility for repairs (particularly internal) is unclear. It's also questionable where internal decorations would rank on a priority system when there were many more fundamental items to be addressed.
8. Fixtures and fittings such as blinds, notice boards, cupboards, and whiteboards are usually replaced or repaired by occupiers/tenants and are excluded from internal decoration requirements.

9. Some of the prices from the Stace survey appear to be higher than the City Surveyor would expect. The prices will be reviewed nearer to time of works implementation.
10. The buildings are now 38 years old and many of the fixtures, fittings and finishes are original, additionally the number of visitors to the centre has increased over the years and thus toilet facilities are probably inadequate and unlikely to meet any further increase in demand.
11. Listed below, for each property, are items for which works were are required in the next few years commencing from 2011/12 with all costs, all of these items will be included in the twenty year plans along with all other components required for future years.
12. The Qvist Building  
Services engineers will be reviewing the heating control systems in the next few months as part of the additional works programme. There is finance of £10,000 available for their replacement if required. Around £100,000 of works to the main heating systems are planned for 2015/16 but this will be reviewed nearer the time to ensure that replacement / major overhaul is appropriate. The ability of the toilet facilities to cope with increased demand is questionable, but if to be upgraded, the present estimates are circa £50,000 with possible works in approximately 3 years time.
13. Timber Hut Classroom  
No items of significance required in short term.
14. Boot and Oil Store  
No items of significance required in short term
15. Ravensmead  
Boiler replacement is due in one year (2013/14). Possible improvement works in the next three or four years include shower upgrades, increased insulation and an upgrade of the communal drying room. If responsibility for repairs falls to City Of London then the City Surveyor may be able to partially fund from future the Additional Works Programme. Any residual cost would fall potentially to Epping Forest Local Risk.
16. Buxton (Senior Tutors House)  
Boiler replacement is due in one year (2013/14). Possible cyclical and improvement works in next three or four years include bathroom/toilet refurbishment, increased insulation (£2,000), replacement of detached garage (£15,000), and the replacement front door and side panels (£3,000).

Carpets in the lounge and bedroom require replacement (£1,200) though this cost is normally met by occupants.

17. Harting ( Wardens House)

Boiler replacement is due in one year (2013/14). Possible cyclical and improvement works in next three or four years include bathroom/toilet refurbishment (£4,000), relaying patio (£3,500) replacement shed (£2,000), increased insulation (£2,000), replacement front door and side panels (£3,000) and a shower upgrade (£1,000).

### **Current Position**

18. The Condition Building Survey was conducted in October 2009. Since then all external decorations have been completed and internally the corridors and toilet areas were decorated. During 2011/12, as part of the 'Additional Works Programme' City Surveyor spent £12,583 on the following:

19. Ravensmead- Damaged fences and gates have been replaced around the property.

20. Harting- Damaged fences and gates have been replaced around the property, the shower and toilet have been refurbished and a shed replaced.

21. In addition to the above, in 2011/12, City Surveyors also carried out repairs, maintenance and contract servicing, at costs of £20,476.

22. It is anticipated in 2012/13 that the City Surveyor will spend £6,500 on Timber classroom. Fire Alarm Replacement (£1,500), Landlords Lighting and Power rewire and Panel Heater Replacement.

### **Future Position - 20 Year Plan**

23. The following tables are an extract of the 20 Year Planned Maintenance Programme for all of the six Field Study Centre buildings. This investment expenditure is subject to final approval of the Corporate Asset Sub-Committee. Investment of £154,350 is planned at High Beach for 2013/14 and £53,800 in 2014/15.

## 24. The Qvist Centre

<b>Description</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Building Breakdown Maintenance	£9,900	£9,900
Building Contract Servicing	£700	£700
Electrical Breakdown Maintenance	£1,500	£1,500
Electrical Contract Servicing	£600	£600
Mechanical Breakdown Maintenance	£1,800	£1,800
Mechanical Contract Servicing	£1,600	£1,600
External Decorations	0	£10,000
Flooring Replacement	0	0
Moss Removal From Roof	£3,500	0
Internal Decorations	£10,000	0
Toilet Refurbishment	£55,000	0
Electrical 5 Year Test & Inspection	£900	0
Water Hygiene Remedial Work (Incl Cottages At FSC)	£5,000	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£90,500</b>	<b>£26,100</b>
Planned Maintenance costs between years 2015/16 and 2032/33 is <b>£818,000</b>		

## 25. Timber Classroom

<b>Description</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
External Decorations	0	£2,700
Timber Floor Treatment	0	£1,000
Electrical 5 Year Test & Inspection	£300	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£300</b>	<b>£3,700</b>
Planned Maintenance costs between years 2015/16 and 2032/33 is <b>£61,500</b>		

## 26. Oil Stores

<b>Description</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Doors/Windows Replacement	0	£2,500
External Decorations	0	£1,500
Roof Replacement ((Felt) (Flat))	£3,000	0
Electrical 5 Year Test & Inspection	50	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,050</b>	<b>£4,000</b>
Planned Maintenance cost between years 2015/16 and 2032/33 is <b>£8,850</b>		

## 27. Ravensmead

<b>Description</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Communal Bathroom Refurbishment Room 6	£3,500	0
En-Suite Room 1 Refurbishment	£3,500	0
En-Suite Room 3 Refurbishment	£3,500	0
En-Suite Room 4 Refurbishment	£3,500	0
En-Suite Room 7 Refurbishment	£3,500	0
En-Suite Room 8 Refurbishment	£3,500	0
External Decorations	0	£2,500
Flooring Replacement	0	£15,000
Electrical 5 Year Test & Inspection	£500	0
Boiler Replacement	£6,000	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£27,500</b>	<b>£17,500</b>
Planned Maintenance costs between years 2015/16 and 2032/33 is <b>£128,700</b>		

## 28. Buxton

<b>Description</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Detached Garage Overhaul/Replacement (Timber Structure)	£15,000	0
External Decorations	0	£2,500
Electrical 5 Year Test & Inspection	£500	0
Boiler Replacement	£3,000	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£18,500</b>	<b>£2,500</b>
Planned Maintenance costs between years 2015/16 and 2032/33 is <b>£66,500</b>		

## 29. Harting

<b>Description</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Bathroom Refurbishment	£5,000	0
External Decorations	£3,000	0
Walls And Roof Space Insulation	£2,000	0
Electrical 5 Year Test & Inspection	£500	0
Boiler Replacement	£4,000	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£14,500</b>	<b>£0</b>
Planned Maintenance costs between years 2015/16 and 2032/33 is <b>£67,800</b>		

## **Financial and Risk Implications**

30. The 20 year plan seeks to schedule all significant maintenance and repairs responsibilities.
31. The FSC has been operating from the premises since its opening in 1971. It was established in 1943 for the purpose of encouraging and providing facilities for environmental education and the pursuit of field studies in the arts and sciences and is a registered charity (Number: 313364)

## **Legal Implications**

32. Section 27 of the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1967 contains (inter alia) the following provision: “Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 7 (Conservators to keep the Forest unenclosed) of the Epping Forest Act 1878, the Conservators may use, acquire or erect and maintain buildings in Epping Forest suitable for the use for the purpose of accommodating a centre for the study and teaching of biology and ecology and allied subjects for the instruction of children and the public generally in the natural history and conservation of the Forest”.

## **Property Implications**

33. The City is providing substantial accommodation to the Field Studies Council free of charge and is further expending significant sums in maintaining the Field Studies Centre premises for its benefit. Although it is appreciated that the City perceives benefit by supporting the Field Studies Council in this way, the occupation appears commercially unsustainable.

## **HR Implications**

34. There are no direct HR implications within this report.
35. FSC residential employees have hitherto not been asked to sign the Service Occupancy agreement provided to all City of London employees.

## **Strategic Implications**

36. The above meets the *City Together* vision of a *World Class City* and, specifically, 4 of its 5 themes for ‘A world class City that supports our communities; protects, promotes and enhances our environment; is competitive and promotes opportunity; and is vibrant and culturally rich’.

## **Conclusion**

37. The Building Condition Survey highlighted some areas of concern. The City Surveyors Department have scheduled these concerns through the 20 year Planned Maintenance Programme which will continue to see planned investment in the maintenance and repair of the Environmental Education 'Campus' at High Beach.
38. All concerns will be addressed in a timely manner, subject to the continued availability of resources and the approval of the corporate Assets Sub-Committee.

## **Background Papers:**

Report: Building Condition Survey. City Surveyors (October 2009)

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