

2013 Plan - for JCC approval

This Plan has been developed by the Head of Centre and his team in response to feedback from stakeholders and customers and is submitted to the JCC for approval.

For a detailed background please refer to:

- Head of Centre's report on 2011 (presented at April 2012 JCC meeting)
- EFFC Business Plan 2011-2014 (approved at the April 2011 JCC meeting)



In 2013 we aim to:

- support the visions of FSC and of the City of London and deliver the City's environmental education service in Epping Forest
- respond imaginatively to the City of London's consultation on education in Epping Forest
- recognise FSC's 70th anniversary through 'branding' an 'open day' event and other activities as appropriate
- build on our recent achievements and innovations and deliver the next phase of our 2011-14 Plan including further development of our provision of learning experiences that are more locally available to north and east London with an emphasis on working with schools especially those in disadvantaged communities

We know that continuing to build the capacity of our team (to innovate, to generate new income, to find efficiency savings, to perform well against personal targets and to seek continuous improvement) remains crucial to the achievement of our Centre targets for 2013 and to maintain the progress of our work.

Key performance indicators	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 probable	2013 Target
Learner experiences	19,694	22,004	23,240	22,000	22,000 #
Volunteer days	410	502	388.5	470	500
People: IIP	FSC awarded: INVESTORS IN PEOPLE	Standards maintained	Standards maintained	FSC awarded: INVESTORS IN PEOPLE	Maintain Standards
Quality	Quality Badge awarded by Council for Learning Outside the Classroom	Quality Badge awarded by Council for Learning Outside the Classroom	Standards maintained	Standards maintained.	Exceed the standard for the Quality Badge in external assessment
Health & Safety	NorthgateArinso Safety Shield Silver	Prepared to meet the standards for Safety Shield Gold	NorthgateArinso Safety Shield Gold	Standards maintained.	Achieve Safety Shield Gold
Meet/ exceed customer expectations				90% of customers recorded 'yes' on feedback forms	> 90% of customers to record 'yes' on feedback forms
Increase customer environmental understanding				>90% of customers recorded 'yes' on feedback forms	> 90% of customers to record 'yes' on feedback forms

Note: 22,000 learner experiences is a very challenging target for 2013 because, for the first time in four years, there is no funding for DEF learner experiences to bolster numbers by up to 2,250 per annum. It is hoped that the breadth and attraction of our programmes, appropriate marketing and the work done to increase our capabilities to deliver outreach will help to make this achievable, even allowing for the difficult economic environment.

Our broad objectives by key theme area

[these will be converted to SMART objectives and be managed through personal action plans]

Programme development and delivery

- Achieve the 22,000 learner experiences target and associated target income with niche data monitoring and appropriate adjustments to marketing activity and optimising provision at local learning locations including the DEF learning sites
- Develop and deliver activities for a wide range of learners (especially for North & East London schools) meeting (curricular) needs and ensuring that all programmes consistently adopt our own best practice and external best practice and that they engender enjoyment and discovery learning.
- Use FSC's 70th anniversary branding to promote the work of the Centre especially at an open event in the summer
- Maintain our reputation for outstanding visitor satisfaction, responding effectively to issues and opportunities arising from feedback and meeting targets in relation to customer feedback
- Ensure that our operations are effective and that we exceed the standard of the 'Quality Badge'.

External affairs and projects

- Deliver intended outcomes for projects for which funding has already been secured [from City Bridge Trust, EU, British Ecology Society Centenary Fund, Epping & Theydon Garnon Joint Charities]
- Seek additional income for 2013 and beyond requesting support from the 'Associates' and from appropriate City and FSC HO staff [including grants, CSR projects, use of the Centre as a venue for hire, corporate training (team building), sponsorship, advertising, 'Associates' corporate membership and donations]
- Produce newsletters linked to enhanced web-based content (with search engine optimisation) to include the circulation to adult learners, associate tutors and some more partner organisations with ever increasing utilisation of social media as part of our marketing activity
- Seek support for marketing and publicity from appropriate City and FSC HO staff
- Seek funding to support the development of 'inspired by Epping Forest' (arts) provision

Systems

- Implement the Health and Safety plan and continue to meet 100% of the requirements of Northgate Arinso Safety Shield Gold standard
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of administration and non teaching work and ensure the production of timely, accurate and reliable management information to inform performance management
- Meet the requirements of IIP, ensuring an effective staff & volunteer team with a commitment to an exceptional level of performance, development and continuous improvement
- Liaise with VAEF, City of London and other partners to share ideas and to seek continued improvements in the relation to support for and benefits from volunteers.
- Collaborate effectively with City of London officers in relation to maintenance of the facilities and improvements to environmental impacts where feasible
- Maintain and improve where possible the Centre grounds for wildlife, learning and enjoyment, including (subject to feasibility) the upgrading the existing Met station to become fully automated with access to live 'data' and the provision of new features (viewing platform, low ropes course, improved access to wheelchair path and pond complex) - subject to permissions and feasibility.

In 2012 we experienced reduced income in comparison to 2011 (with rising basic costs) ; this will be compounded in 2013 with zero DEF income (this was approximately £21,000 in 2012). A significant part of our response in December 2011 was making our part-time Administrator role redundant and discontinuing the role of Trainee Tutor. In 2012 we have made further savings in relation to salary costs by:

- Leaving a Tutor role (Laurence Jarvis) at 0.4 full-time equivalent without reversion to full time as originally envisaged in 2012
- Not replacing a full-time Tutor (Christian Kiel) who left at the end of July 2012

Unfortunately mandatory changes to pension arrangements will increase pension costs within the salaries budget by estimated £7,000 that will offset some of the savings. Currently it is anticipated that the main impacts of the reduced staffing level will be continue to be in relation to the speed at which we can respond to new challenges and progress work of a developmental nature and some slippage from our aspiration of consistently 'outstanding' and continuously improving performance.

Our intention is to give a very high priority to the objective:

- 'Seek additional income for 2013 and beyond requesting support from the 'Associates 'and from appropriate City and FSC HO staff [including grants, CSR projects, use of the Centre as a venue for hire, corporate training (team building), sponsorship, advertising, 'Associates' corporate membership and donations]'

It is hoped that the additional income secured for 2013 will enable us to cover the deficit shown and to do more of the things that will take forward the visions of the City and FSC.

If we are unsuccessful in securing this 'additional' income some EFC operations will be vulnerable in at least the medium and longer term. This vulnerability becomes acute with significant negative impacts occurring within the lifetime of this Plan if the income estimates shown below are not realised. As in past years there is no contingency funding in the expenditure estimates and any shortfall in income would have to be managed with cost savings. By way of illustration, if there was a shortfall in the region of £2.5 - 2.7k (equivalent to a further 5% drop in City of London payment or to 10% drop in courses income), these are the likely impacts:

- Withdrawal of offer of volunteer travel expenses and/or reduced number of volunteers. (impact will be a reduction in our capacity to deliver the Plan because we will inevitably have fewer volunteer days)
- Withdrawal of a proposed 'transitional relief discount' against full course fees for the previously wholly subsidised DEF schools (impact on DEF legacy)
- Discontinuation of 'Winter Wonderland Week' special needs provision if not fully funded from external support (impact on inclusiveness of programming)
- Cessation of the out of school activities 'Safaris' programme
- Cancellation of free taster family promotional activities and open day and seasonal celebrations event (impact on standing in community and promotional activity)

These aspects of our operations (with the exception of the more recent DEF project) have been built over many years and there is likely to be a shared disappointment amongst staff, stakeholders and service users if these cutbacks become necessary. However a much more serious situation would arise with deeper and more widespread negative effects if income shortfalls lead to reduced staffing levels. Staffing is 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 including our commitments to funders; as always retention will be of crucial importance.

The demand for our services remains very strong and there is a clear trend of increasing income over the past 20 years and we have a greater than 50% success rate with grant applications so it is reasonable to assume that there will be additional income. The unknown factor is how much additional we will be able to generate before the end of 2013.

Finance: Income & expenditure estimates for 2013

Account Heading	2013 Estimates
Teaching	£271,000
Grants, sponsorship & restricted funds*	£32,500
Others (staff rent, hire, professional services, sales)	£20,507
Investment fund	£2,375
Sub total	£326,382
City of London Corporation Funding	£52,752
Total EFFC Income	£379,134
Salaries & associate tutor costs	£293,000
Training	£650
Heat & Light	£13,000
Insurance	£8,700
Transport	£2,750
Library & equipment	£3,000
Food	£5,750
Cleaning	£1,350
Uniform	£200
Premises, furniture & estate	£1,500
Administration	£10,500
Rates & water	£7,360
Depreciation	£1,050
FSC Central costs (@14% of budgeted expenditure)	£48,833
Total Expenditure	£397,643
Operating Surplus/ Deficit	£-18,509