

### Background and current situation analysis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Accordingly the plans proposed for 2015:

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

It is envisaged that the focus will be on:

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

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

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

It is envisaged that risk management will focus on:

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

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

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

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




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

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

Subject to funding we hope to:

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

**Target setting: - Key performance indicators for 2015:**

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

## Our broad objectives for 2015

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

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

## Finance: Income & expenditure estimates for 2015

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

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

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

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