

### **Outdoor Centres Outcome Focused Review**

#### **1.0 Purpose**

Members and SMT have asked the Transformation Service to help the organisation to deliver a series of Outcome Focused Reviews. These reviews are an opportunity for us to have a deep look at what we do, why we do it, and how we do it. The outcomes are being used as a focus for these reviews so that we can look at our organisation in a way that is broader than just considering each service in turn.

We are focusing on looking at what we do from the perspective of our citizens with a view to designing what we do from the outside-in. This will enable us to harness the opportunities that are presented to us from working differently, seeing ourselves as part of the Cambridgeshire system and working with others to improve what we do.

It was agreed by SMT that Outdoor Centres would be included in the first phase of reviews. This discovery phase of the OFR must answer the overall questions of how current activities and delivery impact on the organisation's Outcomes and Strategic Themes, and whether there is potential for greater impact by taking a holistic view.

#### **1.1. Outdoor OFR Approach**

A series of workshops, one to one and small group meetings have been held with the three outdoor centres, corporate colleagues and Cllr Bywater who all provided current professional expertise and advice. Further desk-based research and feedback from current and booked customers has been used to inform the recommendations. This research has included a brief look into the marketplace, types of competitor models, locations, capacity and approach, and more in depth analyses of financial, and current performance of the centres.

This review was the first to commence and therefore much learning and iteration has taken place. The learning will need to inform not only Phase 3 of this review but provide insight to the commencement of other OFRs.

There has been some time constraints of the review group due to their day to day operational demands. Consideration will need to be given as to how the correct group of staff are allocated and resource the next phase.

#### **2.0 Background of Centres**

Cambridgeshire Outdoors is the umbrella name for the internal partnership of three distinct CCC managed services that operate three outdoor leaning centres: Burwell House, Grafham Water Centre (GWC) and Cambridgeshire Environmental Education Service (CEES) at Stibbington Centre. The location of the three centres is detailed on the map below.



The three quality accredited centres each have their own unique style and offering of both day and residential outdoor learning experiences, predominantly child and schools focussed, led by highly qualified, experienced and motivated staff.

The three services currently sit within the People & Communities (P&C) directorate as non-statutory CCC services.

### **2.1. Burwell House**

Burwell House is a grand 18<sup>th</sup> Century house situated in three acres of gardens, providing numerous opportunities for learning and exploration. Purchased by the council in 1964 and opened a year later, the Centre provides sole residential occupancy for up to 56 young people with 9 accompanying adults across a total of 11 bedrooms. It offers a wide range of outdoor activities across the curriculum, including environmental science, geography, history and art, and indoor activity sessions in its craft room. Burwell House also has a professionally equipped TV studio in which groups can film scripts that they have developed in school prior to the visit – a cross curricular literacy / teambuilding / computing experience.

### **2.2. Grafham Water Centre**

GWC was purpose built in 1969 and provides residential occupancy for up to 130 young people with accompanying adults over two main accommodation areas. GWC can also provide basic facilities for up to 300 campers with separate showers and toilets, as well as accommodation for 24 staff. The centre is fully accessible to disabled users with a hoisting system to bedrooms and specialised disabled bathroom facilities. The centre also has five conference rooms, accommodating from 15 to 100 attendees. It is located on the shores of Grafham Water, England's third largest reservoir. The Centre is set in ten acres of grounds - partly owned by CCC and partly leased from Anglian Water - and provides the ideal setting for adventurous activities such as high ropes, orienteering, paddlesports, climbing, sailing, raft building, mountain biking, problem solving and archery.

The Centre undertook a large scale redevelopment in 2011 with a loan of £1.34m. Loan repayments from the service commenced in 2011 for a period of 25 years.

### **2.3. Stibbington Centre**

Set in an acre of imaginatively designed grounds, the Stibbington Centre consists of an original Victorian school building developed for specialist educational day visits, and beside it, a purpose-built Residential Environmental Education Centre, housed in the Terrapin building, which was opened by the County Council in 1988. This provides sole residential occupancy for up to 34 young people with 4 accompanying adults, and has easy access to a variety of sites of environmental interest. A wide range of activities can be tailored to support many subjects across the curriculum. An award winning Eco-Centre, and main base of CEES, Stibbington's ethos encourages residential visitors to learn about sustainable lifestyles during their stay. Stibbington's day classroom within the Victorian school building is equipped for re-enactments of Victorian times or for a World War Two evacuation experience, accommodating up to 68 visitors per day.

### 3.0 Value Proposition

The three Outdoor Centres have a complementary value proposition:

***Outdoor learning experiences and residential provide the opportunity for exploration and discovery, developing a sense of wonder and investigation and helping to cultivate skills of resilience, independence and self-awareness. Through taking part in a wide range of high quality outdoor activities, people develop meaningful and positive relationships with others and the environment around them.***

Currently children are at the core of delivery and should remain at the heart. Although, through children and young people, their families, their communities and the wider society, there is opportunity for greater integration with targeted groups. This value proposition stands the test of current customer groups and potential new customers/users.

Whilst each individual Centre has its own characteristics, there are a number of strengths common to all:

- Wide range of high quality outdoor learning activities available at each site
- Highly skilled, passionate and committed Centre staff teams
- Accessible locations with good road networks (as shown on the map above)
- Reputation for delivering high quality services with consistent positive feedback from customers.

#### **Key Activities that should be offered to support the Cambridgeshire Outdoor Value Proposition**

- Provide inclusive outdoor opportunities for children and young people through residential, day experiences, in community and in school learning
- Provide expertise, advice and training for teachers and leaders to enable their delivery of excellent outdoor learning
- Enable families, individuals and communities to take part in high quality activities and events which promote community cohesion and healthy active lifestyles
- Maintain a range of outdoor activities that are sustainable, accessible and affordable to a range of user groups

- Enable the wider private sector and business community to use facilities to support their own development as well as the wider community
- Engage, prepare and train a varied workforce including future leaders, volunteers and isolated professionals.

These activities must be commercially focussed. A portfolio of activities and customers will enable targeting and delivery to specific groups through the sale of some surplus generating products to subsidise the delivery to non-paying / targeted users. There is some current activity, such as facilitating corporate groups, which already support this approach.

#### 4.0 Current Contribution to CCC Outcomes and Strategic Framework

Principally, the Outdoor Centres have strong and clear alignment with the following CCC outcomes and strategic framework, as evidenced hereafter:

- ***Places that work with children to help them to reach their potential***
- ***People live in a safe environment***
- ***People lead a healthy lifestyle and stay healthy for longer***
- ***Commercial strategy***

| Outcome / Strategic Goal  | Contribution to Outcome and Associated Research   |
|---|---|
| <i>Places that work with children to help them to reach their potential</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All centres deliver activities with a strong relationship to positive outcomes for children, and supports the curriculum and its aims.</li> <li>- Outdoor education and learning in natural environments promotes activities that improve life skills (teamwork, resilience, respect etc.) and are widely associated with improvements in attendance, higher achievement, and improved behaviour in schools.</li> <li>- School pupils participating in adventure learning make approximately three additional months' progress in terms of learning outcomes in comparison to their peers.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>- Adventurous activities delivered at the centres (unable to be delivered at school) have a greater impact on encouraging emotional and social development of children, taking them out of their comfort zones to new experiences.</li> <li>- A learning away residential will encourage staff to develop positive relationships<sup>2</sup> – more informal, equal relationships between staff and students that promote students' ownership of and engagement<sup>3</sup> with their learning</li> </ul> |
| <i>People live in a safe environment</i>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children are educated to appreciate and understand the environment and their impact upon it. This is then passed onto their peers and families.</li> <li>- Young people are doing activities which promote risk management strategies.</li> </ul>  |

<sup>1</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5253709953499136?category=6502695238107136>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://learningaway.org.uk/impact/learning-experience/relationships/>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://learningaway.org.uk/impact/learner-engagement/engagement/>.

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | - There is a clear correlation between activities delivered in natural environments to social capital and sense of belonging and community <sup>4</sup> .  |
| <i>People lead a healthy lifestyle and stay healthy for longer</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outdoor centres deliver a range of dynamic activities to suit all needs and include every participant.</li> <li>- Clear benefits to be gained from engaging in outdoor activities and experiences on physical and mental health and wellbeing.<sup>5</sup> Whilst savings are linked to NHS this is a positive impact for the Cambridgeshire system. This could also look at targeting overweight children, sedentary population.</li> <li>- Sport England Research shows young people taken take part in more outdoor activities support their parents to become more active.</li> <li>- Sports Minister, Tracy Crouch: <i>“investment in leisure not only can reduce the burden on more expensive budgets but it also builds and bonds communities, and helps tackle social problems, hidden or otherwise, that can quietly eat away at the core of society until it is too late”</i>.</li> </ul> |
| <i>Commercial strategy</i>   | The Outdoor Centres are ‘traded services’ and all generate income to cover operational costs through a wide range of activity. Each centre has a surplus income target contributing to CCC achieving a balanced budget.  |

It is also understood that there are some contributions the Outdoor Centres have to additional CCC outcomes, such as helping people with disabilities live well independently, however these are not fully exploited due to the current focus on children and young people, in addition to capacity and financial challenges. There may be potential for greater impact and involvement with older people or targeted groups (see Appendix 1 for a full list).

The Review group feel that the current contribution to outcomes should remain and any increase in activity be to enhance their impact or commercial efficacy.

It has become very clear how these services currently contribute to outcomes and the general wellbeing and development of those accessing the sites – from provision of curriculum/acumen based development through to life skills. There is further opportunity to maintain this impact whilst enabling cost reductions, better usage of capacity and potential new users accessing the sites.

## 5.0 Current Performance of the Centres

### 5.1. Customers / Users

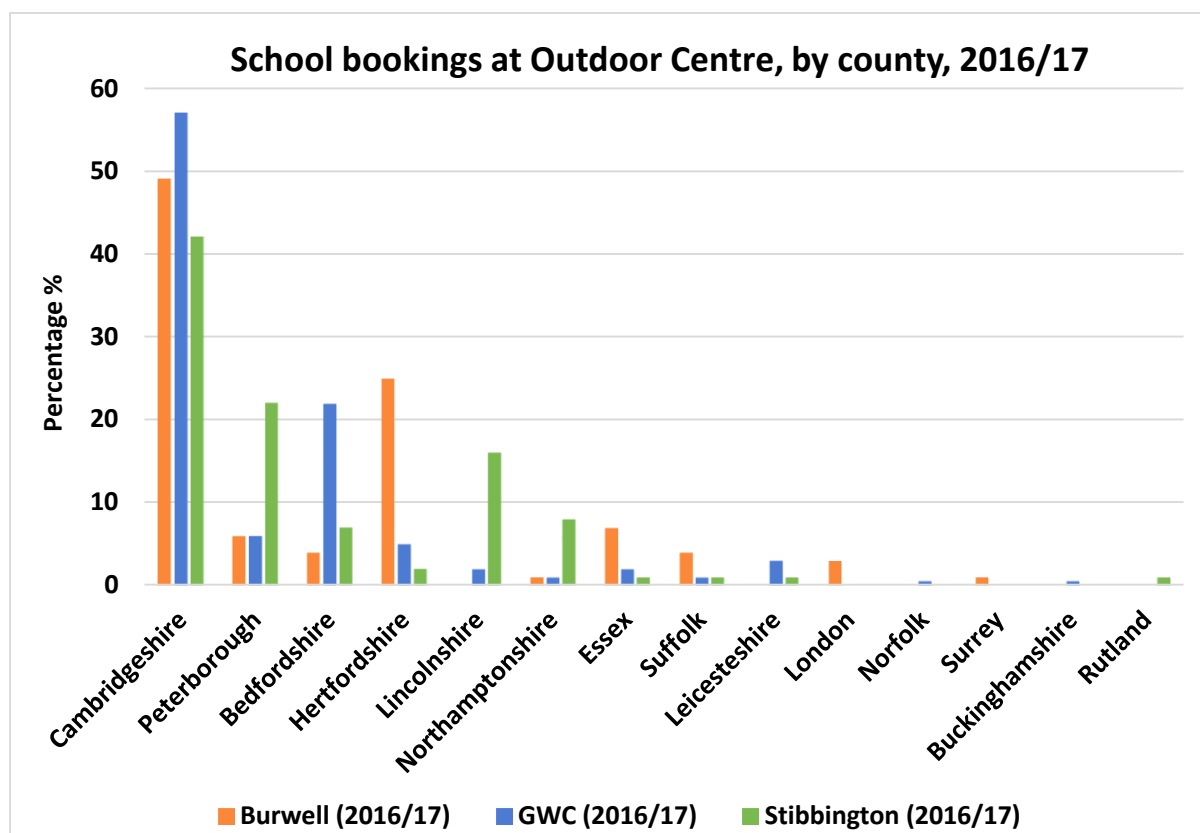
Between 80% and 90% of all Outdoor Centre customers across all three sites are schools (or booked via the relationship with schools). On average 50% of school customers are located within Cambridgeshire (60% in total including Peterborough - a key market for Stibbington) with the rest of schools travelling to the centres from

<sup>4</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5253709953499136?category=6502695238107136>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5748047200387072>.

out of county. All three centres mainly accommodate primary schools with a breakdown of the location of school groups is provided in the chart below.

Note: The secondary school market represents a very small part of the overall numbers of customers using the centres.



In total over 27,000 pupils from 437 schools benefitted from the activities and resources delivered at the centres in 2016/17 of which 222 were Cambridgeshire schools, as shown below.

|             | Number of Cambridgeshire schools | Total number of all schools | Total number all pupils |
|-------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Burwell     | 50                               | 92                          | 3,364                   |
| GWC         | 115                              | 210                         | 15,658 <sup>6</sup>     |
| Stibbington | 57                               | 135                         | 8,500                   |

On average, residential school visitors travel from within a 1.5 hour radius of the three centres. Some customer feedback has indicated the need for close proximity to a child's school or home for their first residential. Such feedback also includes indications that some customers prefer a small, more enclosed site; whereas others enjoy being co-located and sharing with other groups across a larger space. More in-

<sup>6</sup> The number of residential school and day school groups – youth groups (1,131) – NCS (180)

depth customer engagement and feedback is required to inform future location, activities and marketing.

There is some thought currently that the schools marketplace is yet to reach full maturity nationally and other providers are still expanding. Particularly the building and expansion of new schools may enable greater usage, as well as a concerted effort in the secondary school / post 16 markets.

Other centre customers include:

- youth and adult groups
- targeted vulnerable groups (Looked After Children (LAC), Young Carers groups, Youth Offending Service (YOS))
- private residential bookings
- corporate hire.

Understanding more about corporate customer segments beyond the schools market place could help deliver key income streams to help sustain the outdoor centres to continue deliver outcomes to all children from all backgrounds.

## **5.2. Customer Feedback**

All centres receive regular feedback that indicates a general high standard of satisfaction (feedback from teachers is rated as Good and Outstanding more than 80% of times across the three collectively, and individually some centres are receiving 100%). Pupil feedback is also high, with over 90% of children rating the following as changing “a lot or quite a lot” following their stay: *“the Centre staff helped us to learn; we had to look after each other; I learned how to work in a team; I helped my group to solve problems”*. Further details are in Appendix 2.

Schools book some two to three years in advance to secure their residential experiences therefore satisfaction is high to re-book so quickly and frequently.

Some of the lowest ranked feedback for at least two sites includes physical aspects of the properties indicating that investment is required. Outdoor learning is a competitive market and children and parent’s standards are high. Therefore significant investment may be required to ensure that the outdoor centres continue to be competitive, attractive and offer a range of activities that are educational and challenging but also exciting and sustainable.

In Phase 3 more engagement with customers who no longer use the sites or have never used will allow further assessments to be made about suitability of the centres.

## **5.3. Finances**

The Centres are required to recover directly attributable costs and generate a small surplus.

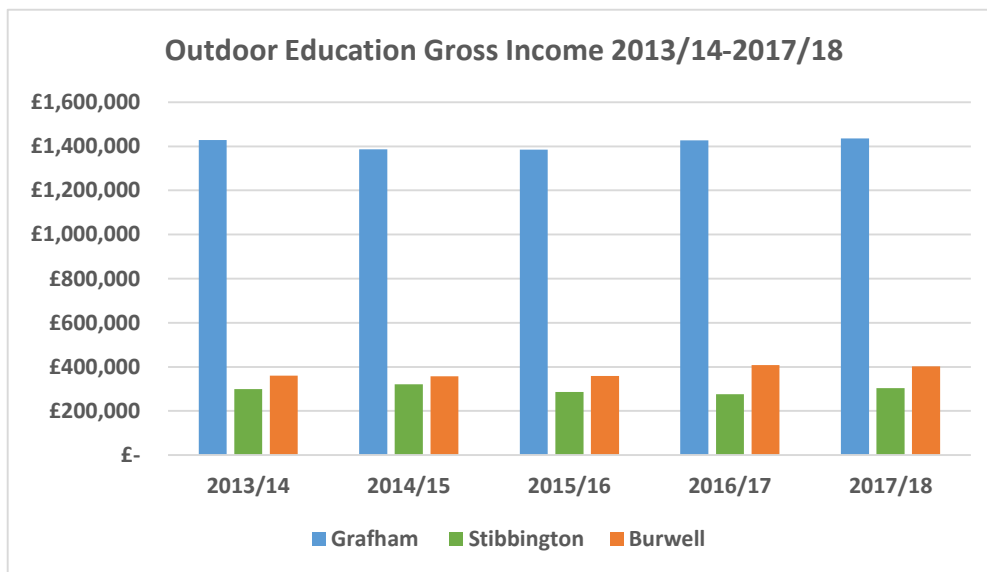
They contribute towards shared back-office costs and pay other direct costs such as LGSS processing, HR, utilities, small scale décor and maintenance, etc. but do not currently have all overhead costs reflected (such as contribution to management structures, corporate services, etc.). This is standard for most income generating

services and something to consider as a wider analysis for providing mechanisms to enable income generating services to operate and achieve greater commercialism.

| £  | Burwell  | Grafham  | Stibbington  | Total                           |
|--|--|--|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Staffing and Delivery (Direct) Costs</b>      | <b>£352,764</b>  | <b>£1,288,999</b>  | <b>£265,469</b>  | <b>£1,907,232</b>               |
| <b>Property and back-office (Indirect) Costs</b> | <b>£27,512</b>   | <b>£111,963</b>  | <b>£19,522</b>   | <b>£158,997</b>                 |
| <b>Loan Repayment</b>                            | <b>£5,357</b>  | <b>£96,882</b>   | <b>n/a</b>   | <b>£102,239</b>                 |
| <b>2017/18 pressure</b>                          |  | <b>(£103,515)*</b>   |  | <b>(£103,515)</b>               |
|  |  |  |  |                                 |
| <b>Income Turnover</b>                           | <b>(£402,636)</b>  | <b>(£1,436,440)</b>  | <b>(£303,000)</b>  | <b>(£2,142,076)</b>             |
|  |  |  |  |                                 |
| <b>Surplus Target</b>                            | <b>(£17,003)</b>   | <b>(£42,111)</b>   | <b>(£18,009)</b>   | <b>(£77,123)</b>                |
| <b>Net surplus margin</b>                        | <b>4.2%</b>  | <b>2.9%</b>  | <b>5.9%</b>  | <b>3.6%</b>                     |
|  |  |  |  |                                 |
| <b>2017/18 Forecast Outturn</b>                  | <b>(£17,003)</b>   | <b>(£61,404)</b>   | <b>(£9,009)</b>  | <b>(£35,392)</b>                |
| <b>Performance against target</b>                | <b>Target achieved</b>   | <b>£103,515 Under recovered</b>  | <b>£9,000 Under recovered</b>  | <b>£112,515 Under recovered</b> |
|  |  |  |  |                                 |
| <b>3-5 year forecast projections</b>             | <b>Assumed average of 2% increase relating to increase in sales and pricing. However, expenditure has a similar profile.</b> | <b>Assumed average of 3% increase in income due to price increases which equates to approximately £50k each year. GWC Schools prices are at the top end of the market. Average of 2% increase in expenditure in current model.</b> | <b>Assumed an average increase of 3% in line with inflation on income and expenditure.</b> |                                 |
|  |  |  |  |                                 |
| <b>Commentary</b>                                | Income analysis: School residential is 71% School Day Visits 1%  | GWC undertook extensive build works to increase capacity. This was funded partly from  | Income analysis: School residential courses is 59%   |                                 |



|                |  |  |   |  |
|----------------|--|--|---|--|
|                | <p>Non-school 28% (conferences, weekend bookings).</p>   | <p>grants and fundraising, a five year CCC internal loan and a 25 year prudential loan. The service are currently in year 7 of repayment to CCC with this year's being £96k.</p> <p>Income analysis: school and youth residential is 67% youth day is 13%, Non-school 20% (conferences, targeted groups, community groups)</p> <p>GWC is reporting an under recovery largely due to factors beyond its control; an increased income target, increased staffing costs due to Pension and NI, trouble in recruiting catering staff and subsequent restructure to address this issue.</p> | <p>School day activities is 26% Non-school (conferences, weekend bookings) 15%</p> <p>CEES has had to develop a new management structure over the last 18 months. Potential developments for future growth are being identified and realised.</p> <p>Stibbington Centre Greener Future Trust was established in 2002. Investment of over £43k from private company donations.</p> |  |
|                |  |  |   |  |
| <b>Pricing</b> | <p><b>Each Centre sets own prices but typically adopt a seasonal pricing strategy reflecting lower demand from schools during winter months.</b></p> |  |   |  |

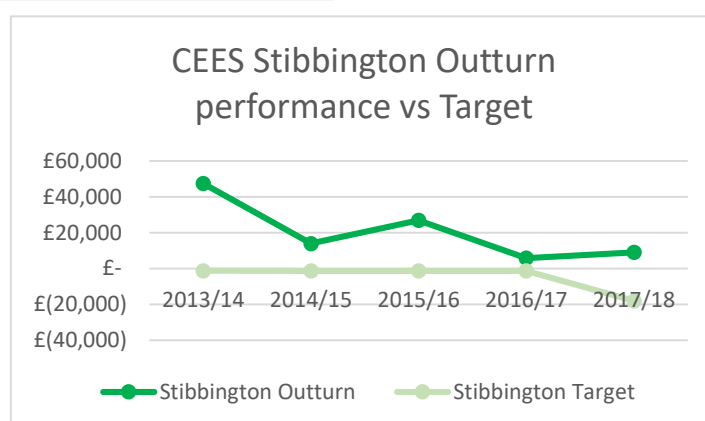
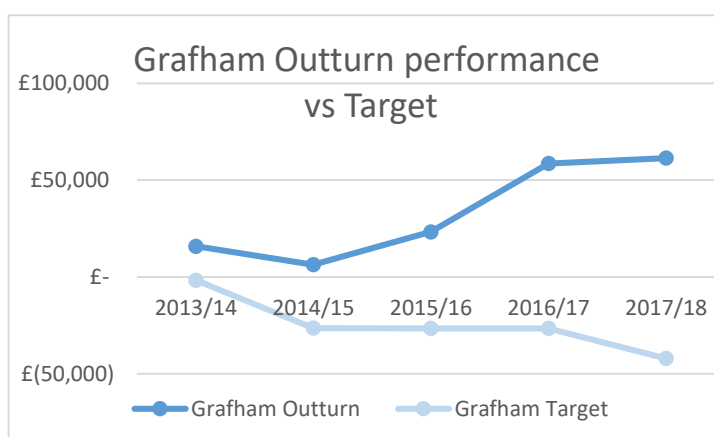
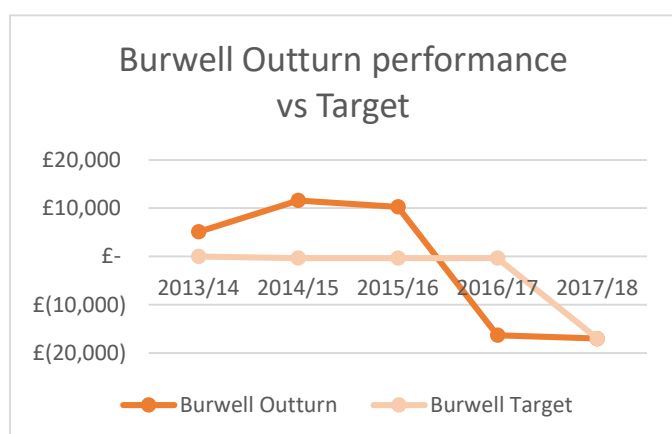
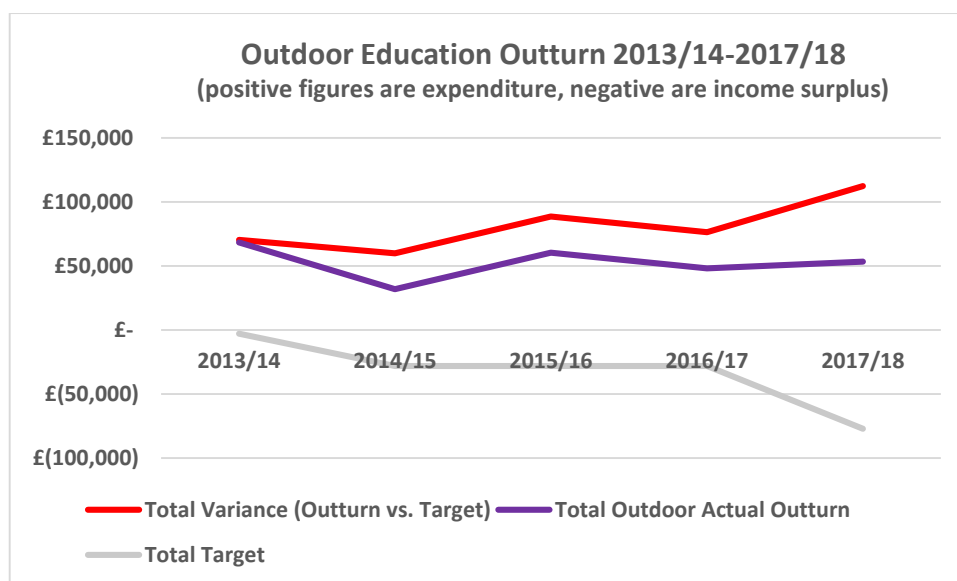


In 2017/2018 an income target of £50k was agreed with the Outdoor Centres. This income target was the first time that the group of centres had been collective tasked to work together, to achieve a specific target. This came with some associated challenges by way of support and planning to ensure this could be met and achieved. Ultimately we are now seeing an indication that the centres need support in achieving these new financial targets.

It is apparent that the financial targets set in recent years have been done so without significant support to the services to identify how these targets could be reached. In addition, Grafham Water Centre are required to repay a business loan that was based on a weak business case, and as a consequence the position has worsened.

Further modelling and support in Phase 3 is required to understand how to fully overturn this financial position.

Gross Income and Outturn for the Centres are detailed below - note that 2017/18 figures are estimated and budgeted amounts.



## 5.4. Properties

The three Outdoor Centres are CCC owned properties, corporately managed by the Facilities Management (FM) and Strategic Assets. All centres have recently been subject to an independent property condition survey as directed by FM which assessed the condition of the buildings with estimated costs given for maintenance and repair recommended to upkeep the buildings over the next 9 years. The estimated costs are at Appendix 3.

It was clear from the condition surveys that there is need for maintenance across all three sites. However, the cost of this work has been challenged by all Head of Centres and the lead member who argue that there are some inaccuracies in the reports. Equally some maintenance work can be carried out at much lower cost than identified as has been achieved at the Centres recently, or may not actually be required if plans for the centres changed (for example, repairing the flat roof at GWC will not be necessary if the plan is to replace/extend the dining room etc., thus costs will vary). Since the capital works undertaken between 2008 and 2010, there has been no reinvestment into GWC, and the temporary Terrapin building used for accommodation in Stibbington is past its original lifespan, is dated and tired, despite temporary planning permission approvals being granted in its current state. Whilst there needs to be a rolling programme of maintenance and improvement is in place for the buildings, there will need to be some individual conversations to understand and challenge some of the details within the reports from independent contractors.

This needs to be fully scoped with the service in the design stage of the OFR process. However, the Centre Managers with their knowledge of current conditions plus the information from the surveys have collated some initial estimates of the investment required:

| <b>Outdoor Centre</b> | <b>2018 - 2021</b> | <b>Future – to be assessed in Phase 3</b> | <b>Notes</b>  |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| <b>Burwell House</b>  | £72,200            | £115,400                                  | The commissioned report did not make any reference to the office building – partly a portakabin with temporary planning permission, and partly an inefficient and poor condition wooden lean-to. Replacement for these buildings has previously been on a council MTSP, but it has been removed from such a plan, and no further replacement plan formulated. There may also be a potential opportunity for expansion of the residential provision, or creation of an additional facility at the Centre through redevelopment of the on-site caretaker's bungalow, currently in good use, but with the potential for alternatives to be investigated. |
| <b>GWC</b>            | £425,000           | TBA                                       | The report has attached some high costs to the ongoing maintenance of the workshop and mobile classroom, to the   |

|                    |                 |   |  |
|--------------------|-----------------|---|--|
|                    |                 |   | tune of £97k. Both these facilities are not fit for purpose so it seems illogical to keep maintaining them.  |
| <b>Stibbington</b> | £90,200         | TBA   | Recent condition survey indicates a replacement for the current temporary building could be circa £1.3m. Stibbington Centre Greener Future Trust would support and be involved in fundraising/grant finding activity towards a new building. |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>£587,400</b> | Expected to be over <b>£1m</b> based on condition survey and need to replace temp buildings | The figures do not include any major build works to increase numbers of bedrooms, buildings or sites.  |

There are some restrictions on the types of usage and groups at Grafham Water Centre. The lease agreement states that the Centre be used 'as a training centre for educational groups and for such other purposes as are usually connect therewith'. However there is a positive relationship with Anglian Water and they have recently approved use of adjacent land to build some overnight sleeping shelters. Anglian Water are keen to attract more recreational visitors to the area so any change to the service or customer base which supports this may well be viewed positively.

Burwell House has a number of trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

No further covenants on the centres that restrict the use of the buildings, and therefore options to increase the offer of functions at these venues could bring in an increased income. This will require significant investment, but could contribute to the surplus target.

Longer-term work will need to be undertaken in the design phase of the OFR to fully evaluate the best location and offer for Cambridgeshire Outdoors, which may include operating from all three sites as is, a different offer from one or two of the centres, or a completely new centre elsewhere in the county. This feasibility work will take into account a range of factors to ensure sustainability of the model, to maximise outcomes to residents but also financially.

## 5.5. Capacity

Each centre has its own pricing structure, but all have seasonal pricing which is higher at peak times such as the summer term. This does try to ensure that there are customers occupying the three centres throughout the year to maximise capacity usage and income.

Each manager operates with relative autonomy to decide the best capacity usage at their centres. There are some variations in the approach to accepting / seeking bookings outside of term-time, in evenings or at weekends as the Centres have not previously needed to operate consistently and are managed separately to achieve their own specific targets. There are also tiered cost structures in place to reflect popularity and help fill the centres at quieter periods, but it is believed more could be explored in phase 3 of the OFR process.

It must be noted that 100% capacity is not attainable. The Centres must be able to be maintained and so may limit full 24/7 operation as well as the centres needing to manage the capacity of staffing models, equipment and kit, as well as ensuring health and safety. For example, a centre may have 60 beds available but the mix of male / female may not allow for the dorm rooms to be fully occupied. Further, there is a maximum capacity on all resources and activities to ensure safety at all time, for example a maximum number of boats are allowed on the lake at any one time, or there are only a certain number of children allowed to use the TV studio.

## **5.6. Staffing**

Each Centre operates as an independent service with the Head of Centres designing their own staffing model, different terms and conditions and capacity. There is disparity across the Centres that has created some challenge in developing a collaborative service and as it currently stands it is difficult to share resources and expertise.

This is widely due to the spread of the sites (although not to detract from the benefits the current locations may have on attracting a range of out of county customers), absence of common strategic purpose and the variation in size and requirements at each centre. There are a range of roles such as housekeepers, caterers, instructors, teachers and managers.

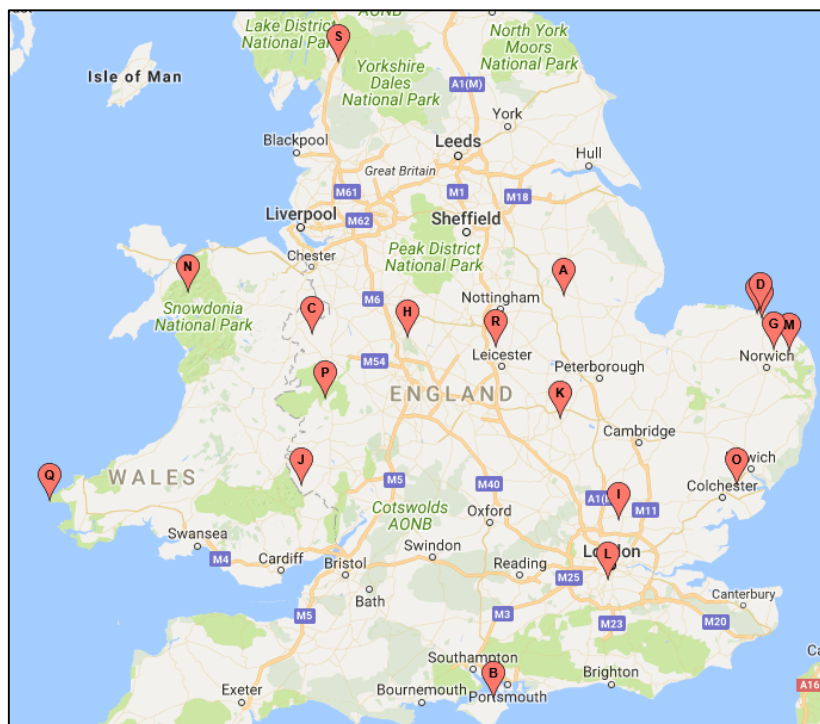
## **5.7. Marketplace**

There are a number of additional residential Outdoor Centres operating in the counties bordering Cambridgeshire, with the closest being just 21 miles away; Frontier Centre in Higham Ferrers. The map below details the three Cambridgeshire Outdoor Centres in blue, with other Outdoor Centres in the Eastern region offering a residential offer highlighted in red.

It is noted that not all of these Outdoor Centres attract Cambridgeshire schools, with 12 of these centres not used by any schools in Cambridgeshire in the past 3 years. It is therefore a consideration that not all of these centres may be offering identical or attractive products, or even have capacity for new customers, and therefore may not be classed as direct competition. That said, it is noted that 57 Cambridgeshire schools used 9 of these Outdoor Centres in the past year (with the most popular noted as Hilltop Outdoor Centre in Norfolk, and PGL in Lincolnshire) and therefore work in phase 3 will research what customers want to ensure that Cambridgeshire Outdoors remains competitive.



The below map shows the other locations across the UK that Cambridgeshire Schools, primary and secondary, visit for outdoor activity. Typically schools visit a centre due to either having an established relationship with a centre or if the centre has particular access to a resource (e.g. forest, beach, sea, specific group support).



All of these centres have competitive offers and it is important that more work is committed into understanding the market. Marketing is a key aspect of ensuring that potential customers are kept up to date. A concerted effort to improve marketing and be open to adapting will help secure Cambridgeshire Outdoors further shares of the market to use any spare capacity.

Many Outdoor Centre models across the UK are increasingly changing into one service that operates across multiple locations. Some models are arm's length or alternate models, whilst some continue to be run within the local authority. Further work is required to understand how Cambridgeshire Outdoors may best function.

## 6.0 Risks

There are three main areas of risk for this review:

Staffing – any future development and increase of contribution – whether outcome focussed or financial – will most likely mean a change to the staffing model. Current staff and acumen may reduce in performance during any period of change.

Customers – any changes in staffing models or the approach of the wider organisation could have some impact on customers. The Centres are operating in a competitive marketplace so changes need to be managed well to ensure day to day operations and experiences are still of quality.

Financial – the centres require investment in the physical property to maintain current customer levels and enable increases. The recent condition surveys do not completely reflect the nature of Outdoor Centres and so investing in maintenance schedules rather than larger more future-proofed plans will be inefficient. Additionally, the services need to make full use of capacity and commercial acumen in order to achieve a financial return on any investment employed. There may be further financial risks around increased centres currently adhering to CCC terms and conditions and the potential impact of 2018-19 pay increases. Also associated risks around pricing sensitivities, and the speed at which the centres can adjust their pricing policies.

Property – a lack of maintenance and investment of the properties may mean relatively urgent health and safety related issues are undelivered. If the centres become dangerous and have to stop delivering elements of their current offers then customers will not rebook, leading to a bigger financial issue.

## 7.0 Findings

The Centres currently achieve clear contribution and impact to CCC outcomes. The core delivery is children and young people focussed and enables those users to learn necessary life skills whilst developing personal resilience and appreciation of the wider community. The delivery clearly meets the curriculum across multiple subjects and outdoor and adventure activities in Key Stages 1-4, and gives young people the ability to apply subject knowledge in real world context. Further, the Centres enables participants a chance to not only appreciate the environment, but understand the environment and their place in it.

The benefits of Outdoor Learning could further support other CCC outcomes or be used for specific purposes – including for example family work or responding to the private sector training or facilitation needs, however the capacity to do this needs to be analysed.

The Centres largely recover costs but separation into three distinct services means there are similarities in management and back-office activities and roles. It is clear there are opportunities for further collaboration to increase access and



opportunities for all, bringing efficiencies to create further income revenues, in addition to achieving cost reductions.

Current operations have limited ability to achieve current financial targets in future years (£77,123 surplus) and are unlikely to contribute to the 2018/19 £500k additional traded services income target without some redesign.

Each Head of Centre has expressed concern with lack of coherent strategic leadership and direction creating some uncertainty in future direction.

Capacity usage of the locations is different and increased usage of some of the sites may be possible.

There are some links to other outdoor / alternate place based activities – such as Forest Schools, Duke of Edinburgh award, National Citizen Service, and the Outdoor Education Advisory service – and consideration needs to be given as to how these links are extended or maintained.

Each Centre requires some monetary investment to maintain the current level of condition of its site and buildings. Whilst the potential exists to increase usage and maximise capacity, further investment will be needed to improve the facilities.

Other Local Authority (LA) Outdoor Centre models have or are increasingly changing into one service that operates across multiple locations. Some models are arm's length / alternate models.

These services, alongside other income generating services, have some difficulty using and delivering within some internal authority policies, processes and systems due to the lack of specific commercially focussed policies and mechanisms.

## **7.1 Head of Centres' Views**

As it stands all three Centres operate independently, with separate budgets, different staffing structures and a variety of approaches to business operations. There are some inefficiencies in terms of marketing, staffing and commercial viability. Furthermore it creates a confusing message to the school customer base. A clear picture is yet to be established of what an outdoor learning journey in Cambridgeshire should look like and where teachers and leaders need to go for support in delivering this to their young people.

Head of Centres feel that a more collaborative approach to working would offer a range of outdoor learning services that were more accessible and inclusive to all young people of Cambridgeshire. A partnership approach would create efficiencies across the service therefore possibly driving down costs and / or increasing revenue, ensuring a more accessible offering is available for those targeted groups of young people. A clear outdoor learning route would be created to support teachers and leaders in developing high quality outdoor learning programmes, but also increase the commercial activity of the services.

## 8.0 Conclusion

It is apparent that clear strategic direction and management capacity is needed to enable greater efficiencies and contribution.

Shared operations are most likely to achieve and garner the greatest efficiencies and opportunities, this is most likely to be enabled through the more formal collaboration and merger of the three services into one service operating over a number of sites. It is noted that current contribution and impact on principal outcomes should continue and be added to, not reduced.

Although more detailed design modelling needs to take place it is becoming apparent that there are opportunities for growth and possible cost reductions (staffing models and joining of back-office activities) and increased income (increased usage of capacity and sale of products to the private sector to subsidise other activities).

The centres are in need of some investment to continue in their current guise – as investigated via condition surveys. Further, if more capacity is to be used or more customers gained, further investment is needed to future proof and sustain the services. Current operations have limited ability to achieve current financial targets in future years (the current surplus target is £77k) and are unlikely to contribute to the 2018/19 £500k additional traded services income target without some redesign and collaboration.

Current estimated return on investment profile:

|                 | Investment  | Return / Year  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| <b>Review</b>   | Transformation resource plus potential consultant expert                | Cost reductions and increase of income in 2019/20  |
| <b>Property</b> | Estimated £587k to 2021 as per Centre Manager amended condition surveys | <p>Current surplus target of £77k per year would mean a full return achieved in year 2025. A 7.5 year return</p> <p>However other LA models indicate an average annual total surplus of £100k is achievable. Therefore a £100k target from 19/20 may enable full return by year 2024, a six year return.</p> |

This Review must improve this profile. This will be achieved through the following recommendation.

## 9.0 Recommendation

**It is recommended that this OFR will move to the phase 3 design stage to investigate and model a one service operation.**

This recommendation heavily relies upon a number of sub considerations:

- This design to be focused on greater collaboration of the centres and the option being that of one service operating multi-site. Without detailing how this option is governed, designed and operated we assume that there will be impact on:
  - staffing models (types of staff, T&Cs, capacity) which are likely to require a consultation early in 2018/19)
  - locations (analysis of locations and resources needed, investment to maintain, investment to future proof)
  - potential change/increase in activities and customers
  - ensuring maximum usage of site, resource, activity, staff capacities.
- Investment will be made available
- Confirmation that current contribution and impact on outcomes should continue and be added to not removed
- Strategic management be reviewed at pace which may result in a two-step staffing consultation process
- Outdoor Centre hierarchical line management be moved to the new Environmental and Commercial Services from 1<sup>st</sup> February
- Likelihood that financial 2018/19 targets (both the current overall surplus target of £77k plus contribution to the new £500k traded services target) will not be achieved but actions to be undertaken at pace to ensure 2019/20 financial benefit
- Consideration of the use of Centres for delivery of additional CCC activities (fostering, respite, family work)
- A decision during the design phase to be made as to whether the review widen to include other outdoor related and complementary activities/ services
- Further engagement with users needed
- Further engagement with experts and/or reviews of other models across the country to inform.

A full list of both short and long-term recommendations are detailed in Appendix 4.

## Appendix 1: Contribution to Further Outcomes

Cambridgeshire Outdoors enables benefits to be felt to by wider residents and communities. There is further potential for the future growth as the nature of public services adapts to suit a changing demographic, something that can be explored further in the design phase of the OFR process.

Contributions to other CCC outcomes:

| Outcome / Strategic Goal                                | Contribution to Outcome and Associated Research   |
|---|---|
| <i>Older people live well independently</i>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outdoor Centres create an environment for older people to meet in and visit with families.</li> <li>- Older people regularly work as volunteers and trustees for CEES.</li> <li>- Over 65's less likely to use natural environments for physical activity, however, growing evidence suggests a positive correlation between older adults finding well-being and maintenance of skills through physical activity in outdoor contexts.<sup>7</sup></li> </ul>   |
| <i>People with disabilities live well independently</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GWC is fully accessible for people with disabilities. It provides weekly programmes and day bookings to Community Support Services, Sense, Kick and Hunts Youth Centre. 550 Adults and Young People with emotional and physical needs access the centre through these programmes. Activities focus on gaining confidence, resilience and developing positive relationships with others.</li> <li>- It provides residential experiences to 7 special needs and secondary schools and clubs delivering programmes to 190 young people. (Churchill School, Upside Down, Highfield, Spring Common, Phoenix, Samuel Pepys School, St Peters School).</li> <li>- It hosts two annual programmes to the BURNS Charity who focus on supporting Young People affected by burns to live positive independent lives. 137 young people and adults access this residential programme.</li> <li>- Most school groups that visit GWC have a wheelchair user or a number of their students classed as ADHD or Autistic and require 1-1 supervision. GWC is used as it is fully accessible and encourages integration and cooperation with colleagues.</li> <li>- GWC site houses and supports the RYA Sailability organisation which provides sailing opportunities for adults with disabilities.</li> <li>- It is open three days a week.</li> <li>- Others: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs X's group, August 2017, 9 guests</li> <li>• NCS 23 in 2017</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.outdoor-learning.org/Portals/0/IOL%20Documents/JAEOL/Ageing%20adventure%20and%20the%20outdoors%20issues%20contexts%20perspectives%20and%20learning.pdf?ver=2017-01-31-124715-377>.

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hinchingsbrooke Diabetics, August 2017, 8 Guests plus adults</li> <li>• Harbour School (day group) July 2017 26 in group plus leaders</li> <li>• Romsey Mill (day group) August 2017 18 guests plus leaders</li> <li>• Woolgrove school (day group) March 2017 12 guests plus leaders</li> <li>• Private tuition for a lady with hearing difficulties who needed an assistance dog (3 sessions)</li> <li>• Totals nearly 100 extra visitors.</li> </ul> <p>- The downstairs of Burwell House is fully accessible, and includes one room which can be utilised as accessible bedroom accommodation, and a fully accessible hygiene suite; CEES is all on one level so therefore accessible for wheelchair users. Special schools regularly use the centre for day visits. Annually 11 groups of disabled people using GWC as a residential centre.</p> <p>- Disabled groups are less likely to use natural environments for physical activity.<sup>8</sup> That said, the centres offer a range of activities to suit a range of needs.</p> |
| <i>Adults and children at risk of harm are kept safe</i>                   | <p>- All centres have a wide variety of targeted youth groups that are already supported (for example NCS, LAC, Youth Offending Service).</p> <p>- Promotion of positive risk taking to support people to know how to remain safe and teachers are supported to understand their students better when they are taken out of the classroom environment.</p> <p>- Limited evidence suggests that learning in natural environments may be of particular benefit to specific groups such as children suffering mental distress, those with low self-perceived social and personal skills, children on the autistic spectrum and those with other special needs.<sup>9</sup></p>   |
| <i>The Cambridgeshire economy prospers to the benefit of all residents</i> | <p>- Developing apprenticeships and traineeships are supported within the centres, particularly GWC.</p> <p>- Teacher training being supported on site at CEES.</p> <p>- Local people and contractors are employed at the centres, and local services and suppliers are used.</p>   |

<sup>8</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6719816098906112>.

<sup>9</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5253709953499136?category=6502695238107136>.

## Appendix 2: Schools Feedback

All Centres collate online feedback from their schools, including both teachers<sup>10</sup> and pupils. These will be reviewed fully as part of phase 3. A summary is provided below.

### Burwell

- Teacher feedback
  - Highest (rated Outstanding or Good 100% of the time)
    - Grounds/garden/site, course materials/equipment, programme design and planning, self-esteem/confidence, involvement of all pupils
  - Lowest (rated Outstanding or Good 90% of the time)
    - Support during evening
- Pupil feedback
  - *“That it is better to work as a team and not to do it all on your own. I also learnt how to think outside the box especially when we were faced with the task of crossing a muddy terrain on a pair of skis. I also learnt how to look after myself more as we had different responsibilities: we had to clean up after mealtimes. Working as a team is better than working by yourself in most activities: when you work together you can try to work out things quicker and easier.”*

### GWC

- Teacher feedback
  - Highest (rated Outstanding or Good 100% of the time)
    - Self-esteem/confidence, meeting challenges (personal/social/physical/intellectual), subject knowledge of staff
  - Lowest (rated Outstanding or Good 56% of the time)
    - Contribution to literacy / SATS
- Pupil feedback
  - *“I think this was an amazing and enjoyable trip and if I had the chance to go again I definitely would! I loved my stay and the food was absolutely fantastic. I’d love to come again everything was brilliant! Thank you so much for having us. Thanks. To help each other more than we do at school. Also I learned how to work as a team. I talked more to people I don’t normally talk to. I learnt to be a good 😊 team player, to trust people and believe what they said and what they did.”*

### Stibbington

- Teacher feedback
  - Highest (rated Outstanding or Good 100% of the time)
    - Helpfulness of Centre staff to your group domestic needs, quantity of food, pre-course administration, balance of activities, links to subject areas, programme design and planning, achievement of your course objectives, skill development (social/physical/intellectual), social skills/teamwork,

---

<sup>10</sup> Broadly, teachers are asked to provide feedback on the administrative / domestic arrangements; the course content; course contribution to pupil progression; teaching of staff.

knowledge/understanding of subjects, subject knowledge, relationship with visiting staff, management of behaviour and safety, planning, organisation and use of time during learning activities, involvement of all pupils, inspiration to pupils, teaching methods and activities

- Lowest (rated Outstanding or Good 87% of the time)
  - Shower and toilet, contribution to literacy/numeracy/SATS
- Pupil feedback
  - *“Thank-you to all the Stibbington staff for a wonderful trip. We have learnt so much and we can't stop talking about it!”*

### Appendix 3: Figures from Condition Surveys

| <b>Outdoor Centre</b>           | <b>2018/19</b> | <b>Next 5 years to 2023</b> | <b>Next 9 years to 2027</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Burwell House</b>            | £153,400       | £270,000                    | £467,500                    |
| <b>GWC</b>                      | £239, 160      | £500,456                    | £662,614                    |
| <b>Stibbington Total</b>        | £38,200        | £238,400                    | £436,000                    |
| Stibbington (School building)   | £26,050        | £93,650                     | £159,200                    |
| Stibbington (Terrapin building) | £12,150        | £144,750                    | £276,800                    |



## Appendix 4: Draft Actions for Consideration in Phase 3

The following lists have been collated following a range of discussions in group workshops, 1:1 meetings with the Head of Centres, advice from corporate supporting teams and from the KLOEs. There has been almost the same suggestions from all managers.

There is a general keenness to create and enable greater efficiencies both in isolation as a centre and through shared operations. It is widely acknowledged that shared operations are most likely to achieve and garner the greatest efficiencies and opportunities.

Whilst any type of 'review' brings certain nervousness, all colleagues are open to change, to hear others views and to express their own – albeit some fora have allowed this to happen more openly than others.

Any actions and options listed below are to be analysed for their own merit and may link to form a package of recommendations. This analysis will be without prejudice to allow objective recommendations.

**2018/19**

| Area                  | Option   | Action / Analysis Required   | Measures   |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| Staffing              | Review terms and conditions and capacity across all sites (note: may very well need a mix)               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Analyse all activities to see what acumen and skills are needed for delivery (assumes the activities remain largely the same or new can be implemented within 3 months)</li><li>– Identify the full model required including staff models using volunteers, trustees, consultants, target workforce</li><li>– Jo Patrickson to do objective review with a view to confirming staffing model</li></ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Staff ratios: employment and retention, developments</li><li>– Incentives?</li></ul> |
| Location(s) of centre | Confirm best locale for activities and customers; potential re-site of activities to alternate locations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Analyse resources needed to deliver activities</li><li>– Understand which activities are best to be co-located</li><li>– Confirm reasons customers attend/don't attend specific locations</li><li>– Identify typical journey mileage and time for customers</li><li>– Map location of repeat customers</li><li>– Map location of potential customers (based on average journey)</li><li>– Radial analysis of competitors</li></ul> |  |
| Capacity              | Maximise usage of resource capacity  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Confirm maximum realistic capacity of locations</li><li>– Identify current typical usage of capacity</li><li>– Analyse potential usage by customer type</li><li>– Identify all implications and impact of increasing usage and develop a hierarchy of usage</li></ul>  |  |

|                                       |  |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Strategic Leadership                  | Have a cohesive view of outdoor opportunities and lead professional acumen and consistency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Linked heavily to staffing models actions</li> <li>– Discuss support and move to Place and Economy with Graham Hughes</li> <li>– Confirm success criteria for the service(s) both qualitative and financial</li> <li>– Create KPIs</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– # quality badges &amp; attainment</li> <li>– # individuals accessed service (Cambridge shire centric, total, target groups)</li> <li>– Impact on outcomes</li> <li>– “Right” for every child</li> <li>–</li> </ul> |
|                                       |  |  |   |
| Building maintenance and improvements | Confirm building works needed and gain funding to deliver                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Collate condition surveys and list all actions: current and not potential</li> <li>– Deliver the H&amp;S / high risk items</li> <li>– Review opportunities linked to the ‘Location’ actions to understand whether investment worthwhile</li> <li>– Discuss with Members and Finance the approach to securing property related investment/capital funds</li> <li>– Planning permission: re-secure</li> <li>– Develop rolling maintenance programme - Who should maintain / pay / improve going forward?</li> </ul> |   |
|                                       |  |  |   |
| New / Increased activities            | Implement new or more activities for increased income                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Undertake Boston Matrix analysis</li> <li>– Analyse ‘21<sup>st</sup> century’ options and methods of delivery of current activities – need a range</li> <li>– Refer to Social Mobility report and identify relevant actions</li> <li>– Specifically consider outreach and additional place-based activities</li> </ul>  |   |
|                                       |  |  |   |
| New / Increased customers             | Deliver to more customers for increased impact and income                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Design activities and understand impact if deliver the opportunities presented by KLOE 1 and 2 (links with outcomes)</li> <li>– Undertake Ansoff Matrix</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Need to measure existing with repeat custom / OFSTED reports / customer feedback</li> </ul>  |

|           |   |  |  |
|-----------|---|--|--|
|           |   |  |  |
| CCC usage | User Centres for delivery of CCC activities (eg, in depth family work)                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Feed into a thematic discussion on best use of CCC resources</li> </ul>   |  |
|           |   |  |  |
| Financial | Review financial targets with a view to remove or reduce costs, and consider how to increase income | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Feed into 'Being Commercial' strategy and approach to consider financial mechanisms needed to maximise income and minimise costs</li> <li>– Specific review of GWC loan to confirm future payment</li> <li>– Model £ impact of all above actions</li> <li>– Model impact of price increases; analyse optimum market value</li> <li>– Ascertain what the maximum commercial output could be in terms of surplus</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Financial target</li> </ul> |

### Future – Within Five Years

| Area                          | Option   | Action / Analysis Required   |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Operational delivery model(s) | Bring together into one service / Sharing operations (note: start from the 2016 Options Analysis but play in the new data) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Model the three options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuing separately</li> <li>- Sharing management and back-office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teaching resources</li> <li>▪ Delivery staff</li> <li>▪ Marketing and sales</li> <li>▪ Administration</li> <li>▪ Financial management</li> <li>▪ Grant finding / fundraising</li> <li>▪ Combined budget and re-charge to CCC</li> <li>▪ Facility management</li> <li>▪ Service and strategic management</li> <li>▪ Catering and Cleaning management/operations</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Full integration</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Using customer, activity and location analyses, confirm the activities and 'best' location for each and feed into above models.</li> <li>– Consider next step option analysis of governance model and whether an Alternate Delivery Model will enable even greater impact</li> <li>– Understand links with NCS, Forest Schools, OEA, DofE</li> </ul> |  |
|                               |  |  |  |

|                 |  |   |  |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| Location(s)     | Have fit for purpose resources in the most inspiring and relevant locations for activity and customers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Using 18/19 location analysis, design a solution that would enable the maximum impact</li> <li>– Consider use of all CCC owned resources – what is the best use of each location (may not be outdoor activity)</li> <li>– Consider use of general public / alternate place options (eg, nature reserves)</li> <li>– Exploit the widest catchment</li> <li>– Understand whether S106 or similar funding mechanisms should pay for new or co-location of environmental and outdoor activities and 'place'</li> </ul> |  |
|                 |  |   |  |
| Future proofing | Developing service and resources that get and stay ahead   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identify opportunities of a more joined up CCC / PCC partnership and Combined Authority</li> <li>– Link with CCC Energy Action Plan to identify the new/'21<sup>st</sup> Century' needs and opportunities for environmental activities and resources</li> </ul>  |  |
|                 |  |   |  |
| Customers       | What do customers want?  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Undertake analysis to truly understand what customer want, and specifically would stop them accessing activities</li> </ul>  |  |