

Natural Horizons

**A review of the partnership at Haldon Forest Park
between the Forestry Commission and the
Centre for Contemporary Art & the Natural World**

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Consultant report for FC and CCANW

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Summary

- S.1 The pioneering partnership since 2005 between the Forestry Commission (FC) and the Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World (CCANW), based at Haldon Forest in Devon, has, overall, been a success. It has however never been subject to a systematic review that could distil lessons from the experience to date; nor has there been any very explicit joint vision for what it should achieve. This report was commissioned to review the story so far, and to offer suggestions for the way ahead.
- S.2 CCANW is the only organisation in Britain with a permanent Centre addressing people's evolving place in nature through the arts. Its distinctive programme began with a focus on its forest-based context, and it now includes a broad range of on- and off-site activities which are seen as complementing the recreational opportunities offered by the FC. Some lessons from arts partnerships with the FC elsewhere in the country are discussed in section 3; but much of what CCANW does remains unique.
- S.3 Section 4 addresses the Commission's strategic development goals for Haldon Forest Park (HFP). National imperatives to offset reductions in timber revenues and to meet wider societal goals have increased the FC's emphasis on nature conservation, health, recreation, tourism, education and local wood markets; all of which makes working with partners a priority. The Commission aims to double the numbers of people using the Park, and there has long been a concept of constructing a purpose-built visitor centre which would include new accommodation for CCANW. (All such issues of course are currently subject to severe public spending uncertainties).
- S.4 The Centre's role (explored in section 5) is to explore new understandings about the social and environmental dimensions of our changing relationship to nature through the arts; while affording greater access for people to contemporary art that engages with these issues. Its programme involves a "layered" plurality of approaches, including work that is engaging to visitors alongside more cross-disciplinary, challenging and thought-provoking work.
- S.5 In 2010 CCANW reviewed its vision for the next decade, and reconfirmed that while the breadth of the Centre's connections with other venues grows all the time and options need to be constantly under review (particularly with regard to financial viability), continuing with the present location is the strong preference and intention. For its part the FC strongly wishes to retain CCANW's presence as a unique and fundamental component of HFP.
- S.6 Defining and assessing audiences and visitors, public relations and marketing are discussed in sections 6 and 7, and some recommendations are made. CCANW's public engagement is the main basis of its shared interests with the FC, who would like all the HFP site partners to contribute to building up visitor numbers. Although there are differences in the extent to which each organisation aims to appeal to a "populist" market, reported impressions of CCANW as somewhat "élitist" appear misplaced; and this report reveals that there may be more common ground than has been assumed.
- S.7 There is more substance however to criticisms about opportunities being missed through CCANW's low levels of "conversion" of casual passers-by into

exhibition visitors and users of the Project Space. Efforts have been made on this front, and further suggestions are given here. A common visitor reception/information point for the whole site could also help.

- S.8 FC and CCANW now regularly refer to each other in publicity and information materials; and further ideas for mutual profile-raising were discussed during the review. The FC could probably celebrate more the national/international standing of CCANW and the “cachet” of having the Centre at Haldon; while CCANW could celebrate more its partnership with FC, and the HFP “brand”. The case for coordinated or joint marketing is particularly compelling when it comes to fundraising, and opportunities have been missed in the past.
- S.9 Section 8 examines ways in which elements of mutual support are specified and evaluated. The FC provides considerable support-in-kind to CCANW, and CCANW reciprocates in different ways. As well as the value of this in its own right, it is important in counting towards the match-funding required for grant applications. More could be done to specify the ingredients of project collaborations in a similar manner, and to assess support actually delivered, as a key indicator of the performance of the partnership.
- S.10 Decision-making on the artistic content of projects and programmes in the context of the partnership (including the FC’s own arts-related activities) is discussed in section 9, covering issues that arise in relation to curatorial aims, accessibility, balance of objectives, standards, quality control, reputation-risk management and contingency response options. Processes are recommended for timely joint review of relevant specific project proposals, and for joint strategic dialogue on programme planning.
- S.11 It would be a truism to say that communication is fundamental to most of the issues covered in this report; and practically any review of any partnership would be likely to conclude by recommending “more/better communication”! Section 10 attempts to be more specific about this; including comments on the role of attitudes as well as mechanisms, correction of misapprehensions, and strengthening contacts at various levels.
- S.12 A variety of revised models or scenarios could be imagined as theoretical options for the future of the partnership, and a few examples are given in section 11. The favoured option is to continue with the current construct (as described in section 11), plus enhancements of it, consisting of implementation of the 26 recommendations given here in section 11.
- S.13 This report could be seen as the beginning of a process rather than the end of one; and a few thoughts on “next steps” are given in section 12. These include a suggestion that CCANW and FC should draw up an appropriate Framework Agreement (a Memorandum of Understanding or similar document) to enshrine key terms of a refreshed joint vision for the way ahead. Some elements of this are suggested. This could also serve to re-launch a doubly-motivated commitment to the undoubtedly vibrant and exciting possibilities of the future.
- S.14 In anyone’s terms, the unique and imaginative public-private, cross-disciplinary partnership between the FC and CCANW has, in its first five years, proved to be of immense significance on many levels. With luck, this is only the beginning!

1. Purpose and scope of this review

- 1.1 The pioneering partnership since 2005 between the Forestry Commission (FC) and the Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World (CCANW), based at Haldon Forest in Devon, has, overall, been a success. It has however never been subject to a systematic review that could distil lessons from the experience to date.
- 1.2 Both organisations individually are putting energy into forward planning, but there is at present no clear strategy for their shared interests; and the idea of a Memorandum of Understanding or other framework instrument for codifying the way forward has been raised. At the same time it has been recognised that, under the pressures of extremely testing economic conditions, some areas of the day-to-day working relationship have been falling short of the ideal.
- 1.3 Against this background, the FC (Peninsula District Office) and CCANW have jointly commissioned the present review, using the opportunity of a small call-off contract for consultancy advice on issues relating to the arts between the Forestry Commission's Great Britain Headquarters and consultant D E Pritchard, who also happens to be a CCANW Trustee.
- 1.4 After careful consideration of whether any conflict of interest arises by virtue of that Trustee position, it was concluded that if anything the reverse should be the case, and that it serves only to strengthen the scope for mutual reinforcement of all sides of the equation. The Trustees formally endorsed this view at their meeting of 19 August 2010, taking further reassurance from the fact that, since the funding comes from FC GB HQ budgets, it is not competing with resourcing decisions made by the Commission in the region and thus represents 100% additionality to the support already provided at Haldon.
- 1.5 The purpose of this report is therefore to:
- review the partnership to date;
 - highlight the most important shared interests of CCANW and the FC;
 - relate this to the context of each organisation's strategic goals, having regard to the other site partners and users of Haldon Forest Park, and to the prevailing funding climate; and
 - make recommendations concerning the future operation of the partnership.
- 1.6 The scope of the review in principle covers all art forms, all audience types, and all geographical locations encompassed by the Forest Park and by CCANW's wider programmes.
- 1.7 CCANW is now one of several partners at Haldon Forest Park (HFP): the overall mix, and the dynamics of how they all interact, are of course material to CCANW's own operating context, but this review does not extend to specific issues relating to the other partners or to the multiple partnership as a whole, except where these aspects relate to the way in which CCANW and FC work together.

- 1.8 The time-horizon to which the forward-looking elements of this review relate has not been tightly prescribed, but may in general terms be considered to be of the order of ten years. The existing Strategic Plan for the FC's Peninsula Forest District (Forestry Commission England, 2004) runs to 2014, but a plan specifically for the Haldon Forest Park site is in preparation which may look further ahead. One suggestion concerning new buildings (section 5 below) looks to a 2019 completion date. The present review happily coincides with a strategic reflection within CCANW during 2010 on the evolving context for its role, leading to a refreshed articulation of its vision and business strategy for roughly the next decade; so this seems an appropriate horizon to adopt.
- 1.9 The wider context includes a turbulent climate of dramatically reducing funding in both the public and charitable sectors. This need not mean retrenchment on every front: specialists in consolidating provision of services, segments of the domestic leisure and tourism industries and some providers of professional re-training for example can thrive at such times. Special cases may also come into play, such as links to the 2012 Olympics. The dominant reality however is that funding cuts are likely to affect ambitions at HFP at least in the short term; and the review has borne this firmly in mind. This report comes shortly ahead of full clarity about the local implications of the Government's autumn 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review, and hence with a caveat about the public funding dimension. This could usefully be updated once the details are known.

2. Background to the CCANW-FC partnership

- 2.1 The idea of establishing a Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World, to explore new understandings of our changing relationship to nature through the arts, was conceived by Clive and Jill Adams in 1995. The initial intended location was the historic site of Dunsland in north Devon, but that first plan fell through. With the aid of Arts Council England and others, consideration of 14 other potential locations in Devon resulted in the choice in 1999 of Poltimore House near Exeter, where the idea was to establish CCANW in tandem with a major effort by English Heritage, local councils and the Poltimore House Trust to restore the house and gardens.
- 2.2 CCANW's legal status was formalised in January 2001, when it became constituted as a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.
- 2.3 Applications for the £12 million capital required for the combined project were not successful, and a new search for a location for the Centre reviewed 21 alternative locations, including consideration of wider partnerships and options for a new build, having regard to relevant regional planning and development strategies and funding programmes (De Facto Project Management Ltd, 2004).
- 2.4 Criteria included business viability; a rural location in the eligibility area for "Objective 2" funding, with land attached, good access, and preferably within 25 miles of Exeter; space for a "second phase" expansion; and opportunities for partnership.
- 2.5 Haldon Forest (at that time prior to the development of the Forest Park facilities and trail networks), which had been suggested by FC District Manager Chris Marrow, ranked highest in the scoring system based on these criteria. The scope for a dedicated building, the scope for a partnership with the Forestry Commission and the forest setting were particularly important factors, and a "market analysis" of populations, schools and tourist numbers within relevant catchment areas indicated that Haldon (five miles from Exeter) would attract more visitors than the other sites.
- 2.6 The consultants concluded that "there would appear to be a very real synchronicity between CCANW and Forest Enterprise in terms of the Haldon Hills site, and both are at similar stages in terms of their evolution and development. In addition, there is a common interest in both organisations in working with other partners and in the promotion of issues relating to the young and disadvantaged, which is an important consideration for CCANW".
- 2.7 The tangible presence was eventually created at Haldon with the construction of CCANW's 140m² Project Space (combining the functions of gallery, studio, library/bookshop and office), by conversion of a redundant Forestry Commission building at the "Gateway" of what was becoming the new Haldon Forest Park (HFP). With grant-aid from Arts Council England and others, CCANW funded the capital investment of £88,000, and held the project to a strong ethos of being economic, ecologically sound and a demonstration of the enlightened use of timber. It opened in April 2006, coinciding with the

launch of the Forest Park and its cycling facilities, car parking, toilets and 20 miles of access trails funded by Sport England.

- 2.8 Already at this time it was expressly foreseen that CCANW would later realise a “second phase” of expansion, involving what was then described as the creation of “an important new eco-building in the forest” (and as it happens, with a target date of 2010!). The FC’s Roger Worthington evaluated the relative merits of four sites for future use at Haldon in terms of aspects such as services, access and noise: only one (the area around the already-occupied site) had existing buildings and infrastructure, and so became the logical choice. A lack of scenic views was its only significant perceived drawback.
- 2.9 From the outset CCANW was recognised to be the only organisation in Britain with a permanent Centre addressing people’s evolving place within nature through the arts. Arts Council England, South West, and its predecessor South West Arts described it as “one of a small number of genuinely visionary projects being developed in the region, with a strong artistic concept at its core”, “a unique venture in its ambition to bring together the contemporary arts and the natural sciences in imaginative and exciting ways ... [which] clearly has the potential to bring significant cultural and economic benefits to the region” and “a project which promises to offer a very distinctive programme and related activities, which are both highly appropriate to this region and in great demand”.
- 2.10 Some further capital improvements were completed in the spring of 2008. CCANW created a small outdoor stage adjacent to its building with funding from South West Woodland Renaissance, while the high-wire adventure franchise “Go Ape!” opened a course nearby, and plans were drawn up by FC for a café, more car parking, new landscaping and improvements to existing buildings (with provision for some use by CCANW for workshops, meetings and storage). The independently-run Ridge Café opened the following year, and cycle facilities were expanded. The growing complex of “gateway” infrastructure had become known as “the Hub”.
- 2.11 CCANW’s first programmes of exhibitions and activities underlined the forest (and forestry) context for the Centre’s location. The 2006-07 programme, under the thematic name “Forest Dreaming”, explored people’s feelings about forest environments. “Wood Culture” in 2007-08 was a major exploration of the beauty, utility and sustainability of wood and its use in architecture and design. Subsequent programmes have revolved around issues including rediscovered history of the Haldon area; humankind’s relationship to other animals (marking the Darwin bicentenary), and environmental, ethical and cultural aspects of textiles and fashion.
- 2.12 Alongside the exhibitions, a range of activities take place both on and off-site, including public talks, seminars, workshops for schoolchildren, families, hard-to-reach groups and groups with special needs, drop-in demonstrations and “taster” sessions, education advice, technical and academic research collaborations, video/film screenings, music and other live performance works, and showcasing of local artists. Many of these activities, in their creative and educational sense, are seen as complementing the recreational opportunities offered by the FC: in different (but sometimes overlapping) ways, both aim ultimately to contribute to people’s quality of life.

- 2.13 Apart from the obvious practical agreements about cost-sharing, technical specifications for capital works, day-to-day operating conditions and some coordination of key public relations arrangements, there has never been any very deep explicit joint vision for the parameters of the CCANW-FC partnership or its direction of development. It has largely evolved organically, which may have been all to the good (informality and open-endedness can often be an asset); but increasing complexity and a need to see ahead as clearly as possible have prompted this present closer look at the best ways of working.
- 2.14 The subsequent sections of this report explore a range of specific dimensions of this. Each of them draws on lessons emerging about the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership so far. Like any really worthwhile adventure that requires bold innovation and far-sightedness, this has been a rich learning experience for both organisations, and it would be unnatural not to see areas where things could improve.
- 2.15 There are perceptions in some quarters that the state of the relationship, no doubt under the huge pressures of prevailing economic conditions in 2010, is currently less than it should be. The commissioning of this review represents an earnest and positive effort to address everything that needs to be addressed, while also launching a doubly-motivated commitment to the vibrant and exciting possibilities of the future.
- 2.16 CCANW works temporarily or on a more enduring basis in “partnership” (the word covers a variety of types of circumstances) with a number of other organisations, institutions or networks. These situations often wholly reinforce the partnership with the FC and do not overlap or compete with it (research collaborations with academic bodies being a classic example). In some cases there is a closer similarity, for example where exhibition or public event space is used for talks, touring exhibitions or artist residency projects.
- 2.17 The breadth of CCANW’s connections with other venues grows all the time, and options need to be constantly under review as financial situations change and uncertainties are ever-present. It has been re-confirmed on both sides in the course of this review however that, assuming some high-level reinvigoration of the partnership follows from this report, being based elsewhere is the “last thing” that CCANW would want, and that CCANW’s presence is unique and fundamental to the combined strengths on offer at Haldon Forest Park. The institutional, personal and supporter investment in this partnership is testament to the remarkable place it has already established in its first few years, in the regional scene and beyond.

3. The national context

- 3.1 The FC partnership with CCANW at Haldon can be related to a wider context of arts-related initiatives which have taken place in association with the Forestry Commission elsewhere in the country (referring here only to Great Britain, since forestry in Northern Ireland is governed by a separate entity).
- 3.2 People value forests for myriad reasons, and the emphasis of UK forestry policy has widened from timber production to the provision of social and environmental benefits. At the same time, many of the personal and cultural meanings that go with a deeper and more everyday connectedness to trees and woodland have been lost. There are major opportunities to address this in synergy with the expansion of public participation in art, and with the growth of arts practices that focus on nature and the environment.
- 3.3 Some of the “flagship” instances of FC involvement in art are long-established and widely renowned; but there had never been any overview of the totality until, with encouragement from CCANW, D E Pritchard conducted an independent nationwide study for the Commission on a *pro bono* basis in 2007-08, presented in the report “Artistic Licence” (Pritchard, 2008).
- 3.4 The Pritchard report reviews the policy context for FC involvement in the arts; the range of involvements to date; benefits and outcomes; practical management issues; and needs, opportunities, and options for the future. An expanded rationale for FC engagement is developed, providing a basis (including recommendations) for defining agendas in future. A list of over 125 past and present initiatives is given in an annex.
- 3.5 Some art may be situated in a forest simply because the forest provides it with a convenient or thematically-linked backdrop. Other art can only be generated by particular conditions produced by areas which the FC happens to control. Art in or about forests is capable of acting as an “instrument of consciousness” rather than simply an “object of attention” (to use the terms coined by CCANW’s “University of the Trees” project); so as well as being a focus for recreation and amenity (which can be revenue-generating), arts initiatives are well suited to dealing with the role of trees and woodlands as metaphors for a range of wider human values.
- 3.6 Most cross-disciplinary “arts and environment” initiatives tend to be stimulated from within the arts sector. The Forestry Commission is therefore unusual in being a significant player in these agendas from within the environment and natural resource management sector.
- 3.7 In the last 20 years, although much “traditional” commissioning continues, there has been a notable shifting of emphasis in social and environmental art away from the aesthetic formalism of outdoor public sculpture and “land art”, to more engaged investigation of issues through art based on projects, processes, interactions and concepts. Moves towards more challenging work and a shifting of the critical onus onto audiences, and at the same time a greater democratisation of the arts in general, have both been apparent in this.

- 3.8 Although the Forestry Commission generally has a scientific and managerial culture, and is effectively a government bureaucracy, many staff are motivated by a deep human affinity with the outdoors and with trees. One consultee in the 2007-08 review even observed that foresters are artists in the medium of forestry, which is an inherently creative nurturing process. It is sometimes forgotten that foresters have as much of a meeting-point with what CCANW represents in their forest management role as they do in their roles in amenity and education. There is now an increased readiness to speak in the language of aesthetics, and to view even engineering operations in creative terms. These present-day attitudes are in marked contrast to the “industrial forestry” values that prevailed in the past.
- 3.9 There are considerable challenges in defining outcomes and evaluating success, performance and effectiveness in this area. A research evidence-base for the impacts is, however, beginning to develop, including through the FC’s own work in the social sciences. It is already apparent that arts initiatives undertaken in partnership with, or under the auspices of the Forestry Commission are making significant contributions to objectives relating to education, awareness, social inclusion, sense of place/identity, creative enterprise, cultural expression, physical and mental well-being, environmental valuation, recreation and amenity, community cohesion, and local economies; in addition to producing art that is of intrinsic value for its own sake. Examples are discussed in Pritchard (2008).
- 3.10 An obvious impact of Forestry Commission art relates to attracting visitors to forests, and adding value to what the Commission increasingly does as a provider of recreational amenity and tourism development, with measurable economic and employment impacts. Some art projects are focused on health, and on the physical and psycho-social benefits that occur when people are encouraged to become active in forests, or the benefits that flow from developing creative expression. Art is used in a variety of ways for achieving the FC’s mainstream public communication objectives, and also features in various education activities.
- 3.11 Art projects that give people greater respect for forest values have helped in reducing problems of litter, fire and vandalism; and they probably also support a wider social sense of care for the natural environment. Some initiatives are making important contributions to objectives for empowerment of the disadvantaged, catering for people with special needs, gender and ethnic balance issues, making new channels of connection with local people, and giving them new reasons for the forest to be relevant to their lives and well-being.
- 3.12 People’s perceptions of landscape are bound up with imagination and cultural narratives, and are heavily influenced by artistic representations. A single poem or sculpture can bridge the gap of access and understanding between a community and its next-door forest; and it can sum up a set of social aspirations and heritage values for the nation as a whole.
- 3.13 There is of course also great intrinsic creative merit in much of the art itself, with a good deal of it being professionally commissioned. The “Artistic Licence” study confirmed that the *artistic* achievements of the FC’s involvements - the meanings, effects, and quality of the content of the work - add up to a hugely significant contribution to the contemporary cultural life of the nation.

- 3.14 A key message from the review was to avoid over-managerialising the creative domain, and not to jump simplistically to the adoption of a blanket national policy. Much of the impetus for FC arts activities has tended to be “bottom-up” and “grass roots” in nature, and there is vital and positive strength in this approach. Many initiatives have come about because of the personal enthusiasm of individual staff, and the flexibility and delegated authority which enables this deserves to be safeguarded.
- 3.15 At the same time this means that the totality is somewhat lacking in institutional cohesiveness, arts activities are not strongly integrated as an institutional driver which would persist in a given area if a key individual with personal enthusiasm were to move on, and the FC’s corporate recognition of the importance of associated social agendas is probably under-appreciated. The Pritchard review therefore signalled the need for a strengthened and filled-out national perspective, while emphasising the need for great sensitivity in this.
- 3.16 There appears to be good interest at different levels in the organisation in taking this forward in appropriate ways, including on the part of the new Chair (Warhurst, 2010). In the current funding climate of course there will also be some contrary views calling for a return to narrower production-based agendas; but this may always be true to some extent and is not a reason for ignoring wider trends and ideas. Follow-up from the report has included stakeholder seminars, FC-funded doctoral research work and the drafting (not yet finalised, at the time of writing) of a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation between the FC in England and Arts Council England, in particular to develop the unique opportunity highlighted in the Pritchard review for marrying high quality artistic ambition with long-term, large-scale land management. Specific strands of connection with Haldon, for example as a focus of research, or as a pilot for aspects of the new ACE cooperation, could be worth exploring. **See Recommendation (i).**
- 3.17 Another lesson from experiences reviewed in the Pritchard report (including earlier reviews of specific projects) is that FC arts involvements are much more successful when the dealings with arts funders and the artists themselves are handled by skilled specialist professionals, than when the Commission attempts to do this directly itself. Engagement of arts development experts, commissioning agencies, curators and critical advisers makes all the difference. This is a key reason for the development over time of a range of forms of partnership working, in which the relationship with CCANW is one example.
- 3.18 In fact since most arts projects have not been initiated by the Forestry Commission itself, the development of wisdom about effective partnership approaches is crucial. Furthermore, under the Regulatory Reform (Forestry) Order 2006 there is now scope for the Commission (in England and Wales) to consider new types of delivery mechanism, such as joint venture companies and its own charitable trusts. One consultee in the 2007-08 review commented that there was (then) no internal training available in FC on working in partnerships.
- 3.19 With delivery approaches of this kind, arrangements for ownership, branding, marketing, risk management, maintenance, governance and other practical management issues can often require particularly careful handling and

internal clarity. Questions on these issues in the case of CCANW and HFP will mirror those arising in a range of other FC arts collaborations around the country. There are however no real mechanisms for pooling and exchanging experiences or model approaches on this, and while recommendations on the subject are made in “Artistic Licence”, the scope to date for CCANW/HFP to draw on experiences of operational specifics elsewhere has been limited.

- 3.20 In any event, it is also notable that (perhaps because of the organic origins mentioned above), no two partnership examples are the same, and so there is no direct analogue elsewhere of the Haldon situation from which experiences would be automatically transferable; as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Indicative characterisation of Forestry Commission arts partnerships
(Based largely on information in Pritchard, 2008)

Key features of partnership	Example case
FC acting mainly as “passive host” for a delivery partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chopwell Wood “friends”, and festival, Durham • Projects led by Scottish community woodland groups (several locations) • Society of Wildlife Artists projects, New Forest and Scottish Atlantic oakwoods
Art sold commercially by retail enterprises in franchise, leasing or profit-sharing arrangements with FC at FC site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several visitor centre shops, eg Westonbirt Arboretum, Dalby Forest etc
FC in formal subcontracting or leasing arrangement with delivery partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chiltern Sculpture Trust, Cowleaze Wood, Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire • Stour Valley Arts, King’s Wood, Kent • Fermynwoods Contemporary Art, Northamptonshire (part)
FC assisted in arts delivery by external arts advisory body or individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire (in earlier days)
Project run directly by FC, with arts elements included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neroche Project, Somerset
Dedicated arts project run directly by FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grizedale Forest, Cumbria
Project run by independent entity and not based at FC site, but with FC making occasional collaborative input, including facilitation of some activities on FC land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fermynwoods Contemporary Art, Northamptonshire
Joint or consortium approach, delivered at FC site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Route to Health” sculpture trail, Cannock Forest, Staffordshire
Joint hosting at jointly managed site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local art society exhibitions hosted by the FC and East Dorset District Council at Moors

	Valley Country Park in Ringwood Forest
Joint or consortium approach on variety of sites, with FC and partners playing to respective strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Wild Ennerdale” partnership with National Trust, Cumbria • Community woodland-based art projects, Mersey/Red Rose area • The National Forest, central England
Partner has own building, as a “Centre” or project facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stour Valley Arts, King’s Wood, Kent • Fermynwoods Contemporary Art, Northampton (until recently) • CCANW, Haldon Forest, Devon • Artsway, New Forest, Hampshire (NB no longer any real FC partnership)
Joint or consortium engagement of curator or programme manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kielder Partnership, Northumberland
Project initiated by FC, then separate specific body (eg charitable trust) set up for governance and operations, raising own funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sculpture at Tyrebagger”, Aberdeenshire • Grizedale Forest, Cumbria (in earlier days)
Project initiated jointly by FC and an arts partner, then separate specific body (eg charitable trust) set up for governance and operations, raising own funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust, Gloucestershire
Project initiated by partner(s), with active FC involvement but partner(s) having independent governance and raising own funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stour Valley Arts, King’s Wood, Kent • CCANW, Haldon Forest, Devon
FC staff represented on governing body of independent partner delivering art in the forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust, Gloucestershire

3.21 The characterisations and examples in Table 1 are only rudimentary and indicative at this stage: further work on this would be desirable, including a drawing-out of the strengths and weaknesses of each approach; but this lies beyond the scope of the present report.

3.22 On the basis of the rough initial typology in Table 1 (the categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and there would of course be other ways of analysing this), the model which perhaps approaches closest to Haldon’s is that of Stour Valley Arts at King’s Wood in Kent (which also, like CCANW, has “off-site” activities as well as those located in the forest). Further comparative analysis there in particular might therefore be fruitful. **See Recommendation (ii).**

4. The FC's strategic development goals for Haldon Forest Park

- 4.1 Haldon Forest falls within the FC's Peninsula Forest District, which covers Cornwall, Devon, West Somerset and the far west of Dorset. The current Strategic Plan for the District (Forestry Commission England, 2004) covers the period 2004-2014 and sets out a number of general directions and specific objectives of relevance to the present review.
- 4.2 The Plan underlines the national strategic shift towards securing wider public benefits from woodland. Emphasis on nature conservation, health, recreation, tourism, education and local wood markets is greater than before. (That said, more recent attitudes, for example within central government, may be swinging in the reverse direction). The approach to management of woods and trees is also changed, with less clearfelling, longer rotations and more gradual change overall (and a trend for more woodland management to pass from the state sector to the private sector).
- 4.3 The importance of working with partners is stressed in relation to securing the sustainable funding needed to offset large reductions in timber-based revenues, given that "increasing [the District's] income from wood is not a realistic option for the foreseeable future" and "[the District's] ability to progress will depend not only on the imagination and commitment of its staff and their ability to involve others, but also on the willingness of partners to become involved". This sits in a context of a national trend towards the Commission functioning at its "amenity" sites more as a host for other operators than as a direct provider. At the same time it is notable that, as far as the general visitor is concerned, no activity relating to the development of local wood markets seems to occur at Haldon. The key of course for the FC is not simply gross revenue generation, but the net profitability of each operation.
- 4.4 The 2004-2014 Vision for the District is expressed as "Sustainable woods for people and nature, where people can safely enjoy physical activity, spiritual refreshment, culture and learning, which are managed for wildlife, people and economic benefits and in which all communities can be involved". The accompanying Mission is "to Increase the value of [the District's] woodlands to the region by meeting the needs of residents, visitors, and biodiversity in a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable way and at the highest possible quality".
- 4.5 The reference to culture is picked up again in one of the nine objectives of the Plan, namely to "make our woods a cultural, social, educational and tourist resource". The associated actions listed for this objective include "develop an arts project in each of the 3 counties". Curiously, CCANW is not included in the list of "key partners" here: presumably the drafting of the plan just pre-dated the time of serious collaboration beginning with CCANW.
- 4.6 Another of the objectives is to "promote, develop and increase accessibility of our woods as a resource for people." The text describes how the FC's own woodlands "could make further significant contributions to the way the environment boosts the regional economy through increased tourism uses", referring to a "great and frequently under-used capacity to absorb people".

This section also mentions the arts: “Woodlands can also provide many opportunities for learning a range of subjects in science, humanities and arts and also practical skills in countryside management, forestry and wood use and crafts. Such learning can also be provided as part of the tourism economy”.

- 4.7 To date the Haldon site has not had its own strategic development plan, apart from the funding agreements that framed the main phase of its initial capital transformation into Haldon Forest Park (HFP). At the time of conducting the present review, a process of drafting a forward plan (looking roughly ten years ahead) was just beginning. Commission staff emphasise that the unit of concern for this is not Haldon Forest as simply an FC property, but Haldon Forest Park as an FC collaboration with others. This plan will become essential, both as a context and a vehicle for taking forward the outcomes of the present review.
- 4.8 In what has become a more or less standard mix of offerings at numerous FC sites throughout the country, HFP includes partnerships with operators of a forest cycle hire business, a café (in this case the Ridge Café) and the high-wire adventure course “Go Ape!” (which is run as a national organisation and is thus a slightly different and more separate case).
- 4.9 Tours using “Segway” (the electrically-powered two-wheeled “personal transporters”) are operated by Segway Southwest Ltd, and occasional other enterprises occur in the Park such as archery, exercise groups, orienteering events etc. The concept of a visiting bushcraft business has also been mentioned. The presence of CCANW is highly prized for bringing something uniquely additional to this mix; although each venture takes place separately and CCANW is concerned at the lack of a “master plan”. From the beginning there has been a heavy emphasis on recreational and exercise-related uses of the site, because of the significant funding from Sport England that originally supported its establishment. Scope however exists for cycling to be seen as over-dominant, and for potential frictions to occur between growing numbers of cyclists and other users (see section 10 below).
- 4.10 On the present annual turnover for HFP of around £150,000, the Park runs at a loss of £60,000. This is not unusual: in fact only two other FC sites in the District do not run at a deficit, and their situations differ markedly from HFP’s’ in having much lower running costs. Nonetheless, it is a strategic aim at Haldon for the Park to be breaking even at least by 2013 (this target may be brought forward).
- 4.11 The contributions of the various on-site partnerships are already adequately successful in this regard, and the future site plan is likely to assume retention and development of the present mix of attractions. Attention is therefore focusing more on aspects such as further reducing costs (for example cutting certain ranger-led activities that have poor public uptake) and expanding the paying car park (while at the same time preventing free parking elsewhere in the forest area).
- 4.12 The number of cars at present frequently reaches the capacity available, and parking space limitations prevent the holding of very large events. An overflow extension to the car park was built in 2010, but further expansion is currently constrained by the fact that all of the land around the central hub and buildings is notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (mainly for

raptor interests), and Natural England have indicated that they will only entertain a consent application after evaluating the outcome of an on-going 10-year review of the impacts of the original trail developments. In the meantime there may be scope to augment parking revenues by holding more evening events.

- 4.13 One suggested aim for the future is to double the number of visitors to the Park, from 300,000 to 600,000. As well as increased parking this will also require the construction of additional toilet facilities and improved information and other services. As mentioned in section 2 above, there has long been a concept of eventually constructing a purpose-built visitor centre for the Park, and the new plan is expected to take this forward. Since the opening of HFP it was foreseen that at some point the current vehicle engineering sheds would be dismantled (there is less need for these now that more forestry operations are contracted out), leaving space to reconfigure the site layout for a new construction.
- 4.14 The model for this is unlikely to be the kind of iconic architectural flagship developed at some other sites in recent times (such as Grizedale, Dalby and Glentress) – among other things some of these are proving to have very high running costs, which the Commission at Haldon wishes to avoid. Ideas are turning more towards a simpler timber-built centre which could be constructed in stages in a modular fashion, replacing existing facilities on the site as funding becomes available, and adding new elements such as (potentially) classrooms, a shop, and importantly a common reception area and information-point for all the partner operations on site.
- 4.15 FC activities and plans are of course subject to the general caveat of uncertainty surrounding government spending cuts: as mentioned in section 1 above, the local-level detail of the impacts on the Forestry Commission of the autumn 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review will not become apparent within the timeframe of this review; and the picture presented here may need to be either reconfirmed or adjusted when those details are clear at a later date.

5. CCANW's strategic development goals

Existing philosophy and programming aims

- 5.1 The earliest of CCANW's materials refers (see website www.ccanw.co.uk) to working with other partners on commissioning established and emerging artists for a programme of projects, exhibitions, talks and symposia. From the start there was also reference to an educational programme, to "ensur[ing] the widest public involvement", and to an international profile.
- 5.2 The organisation's Memorandum of Association, drawn up on its incorporation in January 2001, states that "the objects for which the Charity is established are to advance the education of the public in the knowledge and appreciation of contemporary art and the natural world and in the understanding of the relationship between nature and society through the promotion of artistic and educational activities of all kinds". In particular this is said to include (now paraphrasing) gallery exhibitions, involving all forms of art; provision of a study centre to promote workshops, lectures, courses and educational programmes; provision of an appropriate indoor and outdoor environment "conducive to demonstrating in practical ways the relationship between nature and society and between art and nature"; artists' residencies; and promotion of links between all forms of creative and artistic disciplines and the disciplines of science and technology.
- 5.3 The website states three principal aims for the Centre, as follows:
- to develop new understandings through the work of contemporary artists which explores the social, environmental and scientific issues involved in our changing relationship to nature;
 - to create new art and art practice by supporting artists to respond to the wider historical and cultural constructions of "nature";
 - to increase access to the contemporary arts by breaking down barriers to public engagement.
- 5.4 The same source text explains also (in somewhat technical rather than "user-friendly" language) that "The policy is to develop a programme that involves a plurality of approaches, including work that crosses disciplines, is process-led and engaging to visitors. A thematic approach is adopted in each year which is determined accordingly to topicality and the ability to lend itself to different interpretations through the year". All art forms are embraced in this integrated, cross-disciplinary approach, including two- and three-dimensional visual art, design, new media, film/video, photography, architecture, literature, music and dance, including live performances.
- 5.5 The driving philosophy of "exploring our place within nature through the arts" takes the terms "nature" and "art" in their widest sense. The area of concern is typically described in CCANW documents in terms of art with an environmental or social conscience; eco-architecture; eco-design; art that interacts with science/scientists and with the landscape; and art that engages with and reflects upon contemporary issues (early examples cited were the technical, social and cultural responses to the disastrous outbreak of foot & mouth disease on farms, and genetic modification of crops). "Topicality" remains a key determinant of the subject-matter for exhibitions.

- 5.6 The term “education” is also seen in its widest sense. CCANW refers to providing the public with valuable insights into today's pressing ecological problems, giving them a deeper understanding of “nature” and the importance of sustainability in their lives. It also refers to helping to develop the educational potential of woodland and the wider rural environment. Research links with Universities in the UK and overseas are mentioned, while working with different communities, cultural diversity and social inclusion are also highlighted. (These are obviously broad definitions of the field in which CCANW in practice makes a more targeted “niche” contribution).
- 5.7 Again quoting from the website, the examination of these issues includes questions of:
- how our ideas of nature are culturally constructed and our experience of nature is mediated through history and culture;
 - how the physical demands that our way of life puts upon the natural world might be reconciled with the sentiments and values for nature which our culture has generated;
 - how society draws behavioural analogies from the natural world to inform its own operation;
 - how our personal ties, perceptions and experience of the natural world can become enhanced or eclipsed by new technologies.
- 5.8 Against the background of all these considerations, CCANW adopted a Mission Statement (published on the website) as follows:
- “The Centre intends to make a significant contribution, on levels that range from the local to the global, towards reaching new understandings of our relationship with the natural world and in ways that embrace diversity, practise inclusivity and promote dialogue. It provides important opportunities for cross-fertilisation between art forms and disciplines, and forges new relationships between the arts and sciences; interdependent ways of looking at the natural world. Its uniqueness lies in this unifying concept, rather than in any model of existing gallery, arts complex or sculpture park.”
- (A possible revision of this text is under consideration at the time of writing: among other things the implication that humans have a “relationship with” the natural world, rather than being a part of it, does not properly reflect the philosophy CCANW has in fact espoused from the start).
- 5.9 The Centre’s broad-ranging goals for public engagement are obviously the strong meeting-point for the shared interests of CCANW and the FC, and are hence the main basis of the partnership. There are however some fundamental differences between the respective organisations’ corporate philosophies about the purpose and significance of public engagement through the arts, which mirror a frequent axis of difference in other such partnerships elsewhere, and in the realm of public art in general.
- 5.10 One approach is mainly focused on physical objects or events, measured in terms of what happens at their location and at their moment of occurrence, and valued in terms of “consumption”. The alternative (which would more closely characterise CCANW’s outlook) has a more project- and process-led emphasis, where the value lies more in educational impact or in people’s

changed outlook and attitudes; intangible values that go beyond the time and place of an occurrence or an object.

- 5.11 CCANW would be concerned that typical approaches to cost-benefit evaluation in bodies like the FC may result in opportunities being missed by failing to see these more intangible, wider or longer-term impacts; and/or in such impacts occurring and not being perceived or appreciated. Many funding sources exert pressure for some “product” to be constructed and “consumed”; while the very added value of some kinds of contemporary art, design or architecture may often be in an act of subtraction or restraint being the wiser use of space or resources, or in working in the domain of social, psychological or educational benefit. CCANW’s emphasis would therefore very often be on the extra benefit of a project that influences people’s awareness and outlook, rather than on an object or experience where stakeholders are seen as “consumers”. This does not of course reduce the onus on bodies like CCANW to find robust ways of assessing and demonstrating these types of impact.

Audience development and physical facilities

- 5.12 CCANW aims to engage audiences on-site with exhibitions, works in the forest and events; and an early target for visitor numbers at the eventual “fully developed” version of the Centre was set at 60,000 per year (discussed further in section 6 below). It also aims at engagement elsewhere, for example through community-based activities, touring exhibitions and research collaborations, which extend its various “audiences” locally, nationally and internationally. Quantified targets for these wider engagements have not been set.
- 5.13 Opening arrangements for the Project Space are dependent on the staffing levels that funding success can support. At present the opening hours are 10:00 am - 5:00 pm from Tuesday to Sunday plus Bank Holidays, with earlier closing in winter (4:00 pm from 1 November to 28 February). Admission to exhibitions is free, with a charge being made for activities. Volunteers can also support staffing of the Project Space, and the FC in principle is positive about exploring the scope for sharing capacity on this front, if its own proposals for a volunteer ranger scheme in 2011 come to fruition.
- 5.14 The small outdoor stage built in 2008 by CCANW adjacent to the Project Space serves also as the only covered shelter for visitors at the Hub, apart from the café and the Project Space itself. It can only accommodate a few people at a time, and does not function in the winter months when its canvas cover has to be removed as a precaution in case of high winds. With the assistance of students from the School of Architecture at the University of Plymouth, design options have been explored for a potential all-weather addition to this shelter, which could potentially also function as a common visitor information point for the whole site. Additional funding would of course be needed to realise this. **See Recommendation (iii).**
- 5.15 Space in CCANW’s building is restricted, and this constrains its effective functioning as an administrative office alongside a gallery, limits the potential of its popular book sales and reference library, and creates difficulties for storage of educational resources and other materials. Suggestions for a modest extension of the building have been mooted, but this too would be entirely dependent on securing additional dedicated funds, and on confidence

that any additional running costs could be met. Depending on how long it might take to realise such an idea, it may become more appropriate to integrate it into the larger plans for new facilities mentioned below. (That is likely to be the FC's preference).

- 5.16 Reference has been made in the preceding section to the ambition to develop a new modular timber building following the demolition of redundant existing buildings on the Haldon site, which could house a visitor centre and other facilities, and could become the new home for CCANW. This was envisaged from the beginning as a potential "phase two" incarnation for the Centre. Elements of this concept could be put in place in stages at different times, but the suggestion has been made that final realisation of the full vision could be programmed for completion in 2019, to coincide with the centenary in that year of the creation of the Forestry Commission.

Finance and human resources

- 5.17 CCANW's income in 2009-10 was approximately £136,000, of which almost 52% comprised grant aid from Arts Council England (ACE). A further £54,000 is counted as support-in-kind, including from the Forestry Commission (see section 8 below). To date, profit and loss have been balanced each year and no meaningful surpluses have been generated. It is an objective for the future to build up financial reserves: part of the reason for slow progress on this to date has related to obstacles in the conditionality of ACE grant-aid, but these have now hopefully been overcome.
- 5.18 The extent of dependency on a single funder (ACE) has been an obvious vulnerability for some time, and there is an objective to diversify the funding base in future (see further comments below). This issue was brought into sharp focus early in 2010 when CCANW's application to ACE's "Grants for the Arts" for 2010-11 was rejected, on the grounds of insufficient guarantees being in place for the requisite match-funding (in theory a minimum 10% of the grant, but in practice an expectation closer to 25%, with evidence of a likely further 45-50% by the end of the financial year). With insolvency looming, an intensive public appeal quickly raised the match-funding required, and a re-submission of the application was successful, albeit for a smaller amount than in previous years (attributed to a reduction in total funds available in ACE and an increase in applications).
- 5.19 Another systemic problem with this funding model is that CCANW is running a permanent physical presence and a multi-year programme on a basis of annual grants, which causes difficulties in forward planning and much juggling of project budgets to fit the accounting calendar. ACE currently offers multi-year funding to a few selected Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs), which occurs by invitation rather than by application. In principle becoming an RFO would have been a logical aspiration for CCANW, but this system is now being changed, and applications are being prepared for the new three-year "National Portfolio" scheme as well as annual Grants for the Arts funding. Whatever the outcome of this, the "diversification of sources" issue will remain.
- 5.20 The Centre is staffed by four permanent personnel: a Director, a Manager of Finance, Development and Marketing, a Manager of Learning Programmes and a Finance Officer. A six-month project assistant is currently also in post, funded by Groundwork South West. None of these is a full-time appointment: the Director's contribution of additional unpaid time makes his working hours the equivalent of a full-time position on a four-fifths salary. Salaries are held relatively low given the pressure for expenditure restraint: there is therefore an ever-present need to ensure that the CCANW employment experience is as rewarding in other ways as it can reasonably be, to ensure the successful recruitment, motivation and retention of good staff.
- 5.21 CCANW depends heavily on an impressive input from loyal volunteers, who assist with everything from clerical work to event management and technical support for exhibitions. Volunteers also include the Board of Trustees, who bring a wealth of different skills and experience to the governance of the organisation, and are active in advising and assisting on strategic issues. The current eight Trustees have recognised that their contribution could be

augmented further by increasing the number and diversity of members of the Board, and it is the intention to seek additional recruits in future.

Stated objectives for 2010-11

- 5.22 The detailed programme plans which form the basis for the ACE funding of CCANW for 2010-11 include a statement of objectives for the year, which may be conveniently reproduced here. These objectives are:
- to work with FC, ACE and other funding partners towards achieving a sustainable long-term future for CCANW;
 - to work in strategic partnership with the voluntary, statutory and local education authority sectors whose own interests in the natural world create new opportunities for collaborative projects and funding;
 - to work closely with artists and other collaborators to achieve excellence in the standard and delivery of our new artistic and educational projects;
 - to ensure a significant increase in the touring of our exhibitions and in our knowledge of exhibitions and activities being organised elsewhere which are relevant to our programme and which could be presented at CCANW;
 - to develop plans for the research and development of future major projects, some of which are likely to be organised in collaboration with guest curators and other arts/environmental organisations;
 - to continue to attract significant numbers of new visitors [*review author's note: as mentioned in section 8 below, the target visitor total appears to be 50,000: for discussion of current numbers see section 6*], particularly children and young people and under-represented groups, that will engage with our programme through visits/talks, workshops cross-curricular links and projects;
 - to succeed in achieving a high profile in the media, through new articles, editorial coverage and advertising;
 - to develop our website to show the scope of our work including an archive of past exhibitions, advertise ongoing projects, residencies and other opportunities; engage audiences through participatory approaches on topics through our website.

A vision for the next decade

- 5.23 In late 2009, staff and Trustees of CCANW began for the first time to elaborate a consensus strategic view about the preferred future direction for the organisation over a roughly ten-year time horizon, and the preferred means for delivering it. This "visioning" process is becoming finalised at the same time as the present review report. This is fortuitous, but means that some of the details summarised below may evolve further before being fully complete.
- 5.24 Key issues and debating-points identified as forming the drivers and context for this include the following:
- a need for defined and enduring core values and beliefs, but also for regular re-visiting of the context and of CCANW's "unique selling proposition";

- identifying the impact by asking “Who would object if CCANW closed down?”, covering the public, political, educational and other dimensions of this;
- the balance between “cutting edge” and broad public impact/engagement;
- the balance between specialisation and versatility;
- the balance between locally-based activities and a wider leadership role;
- the extent to which CCANW’s role includes influencing and advocacy;
- the importance (for any “destination venue”), of how the location is perceived;
- positioning on issues concerning climate change and the natural world: taking care over single-issue bandwagons in a crowded field, finding a distinctive niche/specialism, offering leadership and attracting partners on this basis;
- opportunities with new social networking media – for marketing and building a supporter base, but also for interactive engagement on different levels;
- opportunities from a recession-led increase in the domestic tourism market, and opportunities to tailor a CCANW “offer” to this market;
- opportunities in relation to increased emphasis on non material prosperity, shifts in uses of leisure time and in attitudes to “quality of life” values;
- opportunities from an increase in the numbers of older people with leisure time and disposable income (this is different in different areas, so need to analyse trends/prognosis in CCANW catchment);
- responding to a starvation of funds, both public and private, and ever-greater pressure to optimise the earned income base;
- stronger drives towards partnerships, consortia and consolidation;
- increased outsourcing of government services (national and local), creating a broader range of contracted service providers, which could include CCANW;
- making strategic choices that will achieve complementarity with potential competitors;
- acknowledging that many of the drivers for funding will still to a large extent relate to direct footfall (bringing in people physically), and being seen as a “community arts centre”.

5.25 The first discussion resulted in a statement of core values, to the effect that “CCANW’s existence and activities at the interface of environmental art, science, policy and public awareness are characterised by an uncompromising commitment on the part of its Board and officers to values of:

- trustworthiness (transparency, honesty and integrity);
- curatorial integrity and editorial independence;
- connectivity - between people, ideas, art and other disciplines;
- the immediacy of personal and sensory experience;
- being inspirational (including through leadership);
- being adventurous, and not averse to risks;
- being always curious, never complacent.”

- 5.26 Based on these values, overarching aims were re-stated as, inter alia, to:
- kindle and expand people's imaginative faculties and their sense of wonder;
 - prompt people to re-evaluate their relationships with the natural world;
 - foster people's ability to live more responsibly and in an environmentally sustainable manner;
 - provide a creative learning environment which is welcoming, challenging and enjoyable;
 - integrate elements of the "subjectivity" of art and the "objectivity" of science;
 - develop creative methodologies for pursuing all of the above;
 - become distinctively known as both crucible and catalyst for the alchemy of adventurous inspiration, for curatorial quality, skills and judgement, for thoughtful ethical standards, and for CCANW's own contribution to enlightened stewardship of natural resources.
- 5.27 A discussion of nearly 25 different characterisations of roles in CCANW's field helped to focus choices about the preferred way of viewing the future role of CCANW. Preferred characterisations included:
- being a provocateur, animator, and facilitator of exploration, experimentation and experiences;
 - using contemporary art as a vehicle to communicate ideas about environmental change and environmental stewardship;
 - becoming an acknowledged leader, nationally and potentially internationally, in one or more of the [listed] fields of endeavour;
 - being a producer; commissioning agent and broker;
 - being a national/international "hub" of discourse on art & the natural world;
 - being a professional collaborator with the research community, the critically-engaged art world, commentators, other sectors, cross-disciplinary initiatives, etc.
- 5.28 Few of the roles discussed were graded as inappropriate: the lowest-scoring one, "becoming an influential voice in land use and sustainable use of natural resources" was downgraded on the basis of its being not necessarily led by an arts-based perspective. An advocacy role was endorsed only in the sense of helping to stimulate thought, and not in the sense of promoting particular policy positions or solutions. Linked with this was support for the idea of synthesising the results of research and helping to make them more widely accessible.
- 5.29 Some debate was had as to whether CCANW, in delivering the defined roles, necessarily has to be a "place". At least to some extent it seems that the organisation's identity should continue to be conceived in this way; but this then needs to be explicitly identified as a distinct attribute, since otherwise it could be possible to envisage the top-ranking roles being delivered without that connotation. "Being a venue to visit" did score relatively highly, although "becoming renowned for thematic strength on SW England, or on forests" did not.
- 5.30 The question logically then arises as to the extent to which CCANW is necessarily wedded to a base at Haldon. By comparison for example with

Grizedale Forest and the Grizedale Society (which later became Grizedale Arts), the concept of CCANW (as opposed to its optimum delivery) does not depend in the same way on one particular host site being an integral part of its identity.

- 5.31 Associated with this, but a separate question, is the extent to which CCANW is necessarily wedded to a partnership with the Forestry Commission. Interestingly, in the “visioning” discussions, staff and Trustees’ opinions on whether it was a priority over the next ten years to “be a valued partner with the Forestry Commission” were equivocal, some assigning this low priority, some medium to high, and others not expressing a view.
- 5.32 The logical corollary question is whether the Forestry Commission’s interest in partnering with CCANW relates only to its continuing to operate and to be headquartered at Haldon, or whether it would persist under other scenarios. Since such scenarios remain purely hypothetical they have not been explored in the present review.
- 5.33 Overall the position has been reconfirmed as described in the conclusion to section 2 above, to the effect that while the breadth of CCANW’s connections with other venues grows all the time and options need to be constantly under review (particularly with regard to financial viability), assuming some high-level reinvigoration of the partnership follows from this report, continuing with the present location is the organisation’s strong preference and intention; while for its part the FC strongly wishes to retain CCANW’s presence as a unique and fundamental component of Haldon Forest Park.
- 5.34 Having reviewed options and priorities and choices among the “ends” objectives, ie the tangible outcomes which CCANW wants to achieve, the internal “visioning” process then turned to the means to the end, ie the specific types of activities and the operational manner in which the organisation will achieve its outcomes.
- 5.35 A key element of this is the choice of the most effective funding model for taking things forward on a sustainable basis. Towards the end of 2010 a specific workshop will elaborate the detailed thinking on this, and so those details have not been available in time for incorporation into the present review.
- 5.36 Comments have already been made above on the degree of dependency on Arts Council support, and on the difficulties caused by having to apply for this afresh every year. In addition to normal efforts to secure other funding from trusts, foundations and paying events, further methods have been employed in more recent times including a public appeal, a “friends” scheme, on-line auctioning of donated artworks and an expansion of book sales. Further avenues are due to be explored (at whatever pace the limited available staff time allows) for example securing patron-benefactors, corporate sponsorship of touring exhibitions, grants for research collaborations, and other sources. Models such as charity fundraising consortia, service level agreements with public authorities and other methods may also be worth exploring. Key objectives concerning funding at present include:
- to diversify the range of sources of funding and of income generation;
 - to achieve full cost recovery of project overheads;
 - to build up a financial reserve (target to be decided).

- 5.37 The next steps with this work will include the development of a framework of delivery instruments and action documents for taking forward the various strands of firmed-up strategic thinking. Strategies for fundraising and for public relations (including branding) are in preparation (see also section 7 below), and an overall business development plan is also foreseen.
- 5.38 The development of explicit targets, indicators, performance measures and thinking about how true impact is most effectively measured and evaluated should be an integral part of these processes. ACE and other funding bodies will have their own evaluation and verification processes as part of grant-aid requirements, which can be factored in. (Both the quality of programme content and the impact on audiences, visitors and participants are parts of that equation). It may from time to time be expedient to commission one-off evaluations of individual exhibitions, projects or events, with a particular view to learning lessons for future work. Overall, CCANW Trustees will need an adequate suite of sources of assurance regarding cost-effectiveness, propriety and regularity in the conduct of the organisation's business. A recommendation is made on these matters in section 11 below. **See *Recommendation (iv)***.

6. Defining and assessing audiences and visitors

Numbers

- 6.1 Over 450,000 people live within a 15 mile radius of Haldon, in an area that includes Teignmouth, Exeter, Torquay, Newton Abbot, Crediton, Exmouth and Ashburton. The forest lies on or close to several major “gateways” for summer visitors to the West Country, while the Torbay resorts, the Jurassic Coast and Dartmoor National Park are all nearby.
- 6.2 In 1999, prior to the development of the Forest Park, the number of visitors to Haldon Forest was estimated at around 100,000 per year. The present-day estimate is 300,000 for HFP as a whole, of whom half (150,000) visit the Hub.
- 6.3 Visitors specifically to CCANW’s Project Space at the Hub numbered 30,000 in the 2006-07 inaugural year, including 2,200 participants in the Centre’s activities and events there (far exceeding the projected 12,000 and 400 respectively!) and grew to 40,000 the following year. In 2008-09 the figure was again 40,000, but there had been growth (figures not available) in engagement with activities in the forest itself and with the off-site programme of outreach projects, events (eg in Plymouth) and touring exhibitions. 450 schoolchildren participated in events associated with the “Wood Culture” programme.
- 6.4 The targeted increase in visitors/participants is set at an additional 5,000 per year over the five years from a baseline of 45,000 in 2009-10, ie reaching 70,000 in 2014-15. This figure relates to the Haldon Project Space only, and makes no assumptions about new buildings or extensions. Counting methods were not probed in the course of the present review, but it might be worth reviewing their accuracy and appropriateness at some stage. The market assessment in the site options appraisal referred to in section 2 above (De Facto Project Management Ltd, 2004) concluded that a “fully developed” Centre (ie with the proposed additional building developments discussed elsewhere in this report) could attract around 59,000 visitors per year, of whom around 8,000 might be schoolchildren. Given the exceedance of initial projections and the expansion of facilities and attractions available at HFP as a whole, it is not unreasonable now to view those 2004 figures as underestimates.
- 6.5 As discussed in section 4 above, increasing visitor numbers is a Forestry Commission strategic aim for Haldon Forest Park as a whole. An important driver for this is revenue generation, indirectly through the success of the on-site partner businesses and directly through car parking receipts. In CCANW’s case, since there is no charge for entry to the Project Space, an increase in total footfall makes little difference to the financial bottom-line: but as is demonstrated by the targets cited above, CCANW nonetheless has a shared objective of attracting more visitors. (In engaging with more people, CCANW better serves its charitable objects in relation to education, experiences and the like, and so increasing the numbers is an obvious aim).
- 6.6 The FC wishes all of its HFP site partners to contribute to the aim of building up visitor numbers, and has sought reassurance that CCANW intends to join fully in this. Hopefully the paragraphs above will help in this regard. Any

difference in perspectives is more likely to lie with the extent to which CCANW is or is not happy to appeal to a “mass” or “populist” market, with maximally “accessible” attractions; as opposed to particular targeted social groups or special interests. It is important to have clear mutual understanding about strategic positioning on this: subsequent parts of this report discuss it further, and reveal that there may be more common ground than has been assumed.

Who is being attracted, and how

- 6.7 FC consultees during the present review voiced a perception that the CCANW “offer” is seen to be pitched at minority or even “élite” segments of the HFP market. This is then interpreted as CCANW significantly missing some of the opportunity provided by the large footfall captured by the Hub.
- 6.8 It is obviously true that an arts-led engagement with natural world experiences and questions is not for everyone, just as cycling is not for everyone. As mentioned more fully later in this report however, patchy communications may have led to some exaggerated mythology about the supposedly “specialist” nature of CCANW and its work. The present review has attempted to marshal a more complete and factual basis for views about this.
- 6.9 CCANW’s own view of itself, as reflected in its published programmes (but not yet fully on other parts of its soon-to-be-revamped website), and in line with its charitable objects (see section 5 above), is of a spectrum of different types of activity appealing to a spectrum of different types of audience; some of these being more consciously targeted as such than others. For the purposes of this report, and without at present any good measure of the relative proportions of each, the spectrum might be divided into three segments (somewhat caricaturing the reality, for illustrative effect), as follows:
- “enthusiasts” (for contemporary art, and/or for environmentalism);
 - “sign-ups” (actively exploring new opportunities for experiences, education or entertainment);
 - “the casually curious” (= “passing trade”).
- 6.10 There is certainly a segment of this spectrum (the “enthusiasts”) that reflects CCANW’s international reputation and critical acclaim in eminent professional circles and in the “art world”, (and more particularly in the “environmental art world”), for having attracted artists of world renown to make, show and explain work of acknowledged significance, and for having curated ground-breaking and influential programmes of exhibitions, associated events and dialogues at Haldon. A proportion of people come to HFP specifically to witness or take part in these parts of the Centre’s “offer”, sometimes from other continents. Although this is not a majority slice of the Forest Park visitor volume, it constitutes net added value to its public profile, and to its standing in wider contexts. If there is any élitism in this segment of the spectrum however, it should be well counterbalanced by the other segments.
- 6.11 As an example, CCANW’s grant application to Arts Council England for 2010-11 is probably a good expression of the way in which the organisation aims to cater for the “sign-ups” segment (and as it happens, notably foregrounding the phrase “non-élitist”). It states: “We aim to introduce new audiences to high quality art and activities in an informal, friendly and non-élitist

environment, and for artists to be encouraged to connect with more people. Importantly, we will build on the existing networks we have with groups in the voluntary sector and schools – and our excellent track record with them – to develop new projects and activities which meet the needs of these groups”.

- 6.12 CCANW’s programme aims to include specific provision for certain key groups of society. Early in the 2010-11 programming year, CCANW was already reporting an increased level of approaches from groups which had participated in 2009-10 (both on-site at Haldon and elsewhere), and with whom stronger relationships continue to be built. It has not been possible to present statistics on this for the present review (something which should follow at a later date), but these include:
- primary and secondary schools, particularly in disadvantaged local areas;
 - specialist schools working with the disabled;
 - groups supporting the young and homeless;
 - mental health service users;
 - Planet Rainbow (a support group for mixed heritage and black & minority ethnic families, children and young people in Devon);
 - The Hikmat Elders (a group of elder members of the black & minority ethnic communities in Exeter and surrounding areas);
 - Age Concern and other older people’s groups;
 - higher education institutions.
- 6.13 The trend of repeat visits and regular users of CCANW, alluded to above, is becoming more marked. This is building a more structured relationship with surrounding communities, where in some cases engagement with CCANW is becoming a built-in feature of the calendar for groups like the Brownies and various schools. These groups are diverse and cross-cutting in terms of social and cultural categories; and the “ripple effect” of their CCANW experiences, at community level and within families, may recruit adults as visitors to and supporters of Haldon Forest in ways that add to what the FC itself can do. CCANW is also generally likely to cater more than the FC for disadvantaged groups, and to interact directly with various target communities in Exeter and neighbouring towns.
- 6.14 The individual visits of these groups are also often relatively structured: one of the attractions of a CCANW visit for schools is that the Centre is able to shape an entire school day of activities and experiences. This again probably complements the types of engagement offered by the FC itself and the other HFP site partners; but there appears to be no sharing of information between them on what each is planning. Demand from schools, incidentally, currently outstrips what the Centre’s current capacity can supply (mainly in terms of staff time, although physical limitations of the current Project Space are also a factor).
- 6.15 Alongside considerations of ethnic and cultural diversity are those of gender balance, and both the FC and CCANW are conscious of this dimension of their visitor profile. In CCANW’s case the balance is sometimes achieved over time. For example while the “Wood Culture” programme (2007-08) tended to engage a larger proportion of men than women (statistically more men are involved in forestry and architecture), the “Fashion, Textiles and the Environment” programme (2010-11) is appealing to a high proportion of women and young people.

- 6.16 The 2010-11 “Fashion, Textiles and the Environment” programme conveniently exemplifies the breadth of audiences CCANW typically reaches nowadays. It covers, for example:
- an exhibition of sculptures, videos, objects, drawings and photographs created by artist Lucy Orta, who draws inspiration from a variety of disciplines including fashion, architecture, design philosophy, social activism and traditional art practice;
 - the project “Fashion Footprints: Sustainable Approaches”, originated and organised by CCANW, and curated by graduates from the Centre for Sustainable Fashion at the London College of Fashion, exploring the idea of fashion and textiles acting as an interface between humankind and the environment, and highlighting the key problems and major environmental and social impacts that result from the fashion and textile industries;
 - an exhibition, “Material Actions”, selected by open submission, which questions how textiles are used to affect and contribute to ethical, social, cultural and environmental change, drawing from the best of critically-engaged textile practice and including both emerging and established artists: organised in collaboration with Textile Forum South West and the Viewpoint Gallery at Plymouth College of Art;
 - an exhibition and presentations at the annual conference of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management, in London;
 - an activity and exhibition during an event held at the Met Office in Exeter, in collaboration with other arts organisations;
 - a performance art and educational activity at the Contemporary Craft Fair, Bovey Tracey;
 - a “fashion market place” and workshop event at HFP, linked to the annual “Art in the Park” festival.
- 6.17 The difference between the Hub footfall of (at least?) 150,000 and CCANW throughput of 40,000 (see above) raises questions about the “passing trade”/“casually curious” segment of the audience spectrum, and the extent to which the “missed opportunity” charge in this respect may be well-founded. FC staff firmly believe that this is a significant area of weakness.
- 6.18 A missed opportunity here should matter to CCANW. “Casually curious” visitors should be regarded as prime potential for “conversion” into book-purchasers, exhibition-viewers, event participants, word-of-mouth promoters, donors, re-visitors, enlisted supporters, “sign-ups” and even “enthusiasts”. Many will have found themselves at HFP initially for other reasons; or once there, may be led from one element of the site to another. It has been noted for example that the opening of the Ridge Café adjacent to the Project Space stimulated more visits to CCANW. Placing activities for children near the entrance has also been successful in drawing in families. Rates of “conversion” at present however are probably much lower than they could be. Clear information, inspirational “hooks” and above all positive, welcoming first impressions are crucial to facilitating the crossing of the “conversion” threshold.
- 6.19 This issue was the focus of some fairly consistent critical comment during the consultations for the present review. Although not always accurately informed (see section 10 below), FC perceptions (both first and second-hand)

were recurrently of a poor welcome for the casual visitor at the CCANW Project Space, of people being too uncertain or fearful to cross the threshold, faced by a perplexing, intimidating, obscure, austere or otherwise uninviting environment, and feeling a sense of intrusion into what appears sometimes to be primarily a working office (a comment made more than once was that people are “uncertain whether they are allowed to go in”).

- 6.20 Moreover, it seems probable that a proportion of those who do cross the threshold look around quickly and leave. This is of course normal for any gallery, shop or other public facility. It is of particular importance to the present discussion however to consider to what extent quoted total visitor figures mask a distinction between this type of visit and a more meaningfully engaged type of visit; and also to consider what more might be done to improve the respective proportions of each type.
- 6.21 Cyclists are reported to feel deterred from entering the Project Space when muddy after returning from the trails; assuming they would be unwelcome, when this may not be the case. They are also reportedly unwilling to leave their cycles unattended, and there is a lack of cycle racks or other parking arrangements that would encourage them to dismount and “convert” to being a pedestrian visitor after being a two-wheeled one. Dog owners similarly have no convenient place for temporarily tethering their dogs.
- 6.22 Staff of both the Ridge Café and CCANW experience irritation from numerous callers who do not intend to visit, but are instead asking directions to other site amenities, principally the “Go Ape!” site which is not directly visible from the Hub. Better signage for this is almost certainly required; but at the same time the café and CCANW could potentially do more to see each such person as a potential “conversion”!
- 6.23 A common front-of-house visitor reception/information point for the whole site would undoubtedly help. At present the FC ranger staff can be helpful in the advice and information they give when they are present at the point of entry to the Hub, but duties tend to call them elsewhere for much of the day, especially on weekdays, and although there is some use of volunteers, that does not offer a full substitute. (A strategic plan for further development of the use of volunteers is in preparation). As mentioned elsewhere in this report (eg section 5 above), long-term redevelopment plans for the site could encompass a proper common reception point; and in the short term the ideas for a possible “shelter” construction might possibly encompass something of the kind on a smaller scale.
- 6.24 Meanwhile, efforts have clearly been made by CCANW to put friendly welcome messages on the door, groups outside are sometimes actively approached and invited in, and the friendliness, enthusiasm and welcoming warmth of Centre staff is undeniable once conversation with them is engaged; but it seems that the initial barrier to approach remains a problem. Rightly or wrongly (and the earlier parts of this section of the report above suggest it is wrongly), FC staff on site find themselves questioning whether it is in fact an aim of CCANW to attract more people. The evidence suggests that the impression of “élitism” is a misconception; but here doubtless lie the origins of that idea. **See Recommendation (v).**

Feedback and evaluation

- 6.25 Several surveys of HFP visitors have been organised by the FC. In 2005, prior to the Park's opening, a baseline survey developed the Social Research Group of Forest Research was conducted using electronic counters and questionnaires at the site. This recorded numbers in different demographic groups (defined by Sport England in line with government priorities for increasing physical activity), travel distances, length and nature of visits, and other data.
- 6.26 Similar surveys were then conducted in the subsequent two years, to compare before and after the opening of the Park, showing for example that more people were visiting with family and friends, suggesting that the new activities and facilities were particularly appealing to family and friend groups (Anon, 2007). Apart from logging numbers of events and the Project Space visitor numbers already referred to above, no specific findings were reported in relation to CCANW.
- 6.27 In 2009 a more extensive study was undertaken as part of a national FC programme of quality of experience (QOE) surveys at sites around England. Over 300 Haldon Forest visitors were interviewed between July and October that year, and an analysis report was produced (TNS Research International, 2009). This analyses the visitor profile and a range of visit behaviours and motivations.
- 6.28 Since it was required to follow a national format, the questions in this survey include nothing referring to CCANW, nor are there any prompts in a more general sense regarding arts-related dimensions of a forest visit experience. It is perhaps a pity that the opportunity was not taken to add a small supplementary dimension that could have covered this, and it seems that CCANW were not invited to have any involvement in planning the research.
- 6.29 Even without a specific element directed towards CCANW, it is still surprising that the TNS survey results appear completely silent about any statistics or views relating to the Centre. In the 129 page report, the single reference is in one raw data-point, namely a questionnaire response which in the section on "suggested improvements" stated "open art centre". This is uninterpretable, the more so given that the surveyor himself arrived at a time when CCANW was the only place that was open, and it was the Centre's staff who helped orientate him for his work! A separate "mystery guest" feedback return in early 2010, which also followed a national format, also makes no reference to CCANW.
- 6.30 Nonetheless it must be the case that some of what is reported among the various findings and patterns of visitor numbers, profile, behaviour and opinion will have been driven or influenced by CCANW's being part of the experience of some of the visitors. Equally, some of the CCANW impact lies beyond the scope of the survey, including off-site activities and in the unsurveyed opinions of those whose sole reason for being at HFP was to visit the Centre.
- 6.31 There are no specific plans by FC at present to undertake further visitor surveys at HFP, although participants in individual FC events are normally invited to complete an event evaluation form. Ad hoc feedback is obtained

meanwhile in other ways, including personal contact with ranger staff and postings on the dedicated Haldon Forest Park interactive web-pages at www.facebook.com, which includes information about CCANW. The Facebook page receives relatively high volumes of input compared with the feedback facility on the FC's main website, particularly from cyclists and regular site users; and there are also 1,000 signed-up members of the associated on-line HFP Facebook Group. These sources have not been analysed in the present review, and whether any insights appear there regarding CCANW is not known.

- 6.32 Audience evaluation is carried out by CCANW of its own activities in various ways, and perceptions of what has worked well and what has worked less well are quite highly developed on the part of the Centre's staff; but documentary information on this has not been analysed for the present review. Reports to funders and statutory annual reports under charities and company law requirements include more or less basic assessments, there is basic monitoring data on attendance at exhibitions and events, and a certain amount of feedback is provided by participants and visitors.
- 6.33 The admittedly largely self-selected sample that has generated this intelligence reveals a deep interest in the ecological themes and issues raised by CCANW's remit, and in the treatment of these themes from an arts-based perspective. People are frequently keen to find out how to become more involved. Gallery talks typically include an overview of future programmes in development: audience members have been inspired by this and have contributed rich ideas and insights to the process, sometimes returning to become involved as volunteers.
- 6.34 There is doubtless intelligence contained within the feedback CCANW generates for its own evaluation purposes which could be of value to the FC and/or other site partners at HFP. One example is the criticism often voiced by Centre visitors about the lack of public transport to the site (echoing a comment reported in the TNS study), linked to negative views from local residents about the HFP-driven increase in traffic volumes in the area. (CCANW provides its own minibus transport for some group visits, such as those run for mental health service users in conjunction with the Self Heal Association; and the FC has done likewise in the past when there was specific project funding with a budget-line for doing so: but this is an issue on which further work would be worthwhile). **See Recommendation (vi).**
- 6.35 Clearly the compiled data and analyses that exist at present offer little basis for specific conclusions that would bear on the FC-CCANW partnership. There is scope for more sharing of perspectives on this, and clear scope for further investigation of visitor, audience and participant profiles, behaviours and perceptions in future. Some specific recommendations are offered in section 11 below. **See Recommendations (vii) and (viii).**

7. Public relations and marketing

- 7.1 For the most part, the FC and the different site partners at Haldon Forest Park each determine and undertake their own press activity, public relations and marketing separately. There is a basic minimum of coordination and joint presentation, but most consultees felt there could be more.
- 7.2 This view is reinforced by the fact that in addition to the individual public identities of each of the bodies that are active at the site, "Haldon Forest Park" is itself a brand identity, and is the one which the FC wishes to promote above all (for example it has its own logo, and its own URL, www.haldonforestpark.org.uk, as an area of the FC England website:). One reason for this is that the basis of Sport England's funding was the creation of the Forest Park with all its ingredients.
- 7.3 CCANW communicates with a mailing list, a "friends" group and a volunteer network, in addition to distributing printed programmes to local public outlets, maintaining a website and securing both news and feature coverage in magazines and the press, including through press-releases. The rather limited website is undergoing some interim enhancements while a major re-vamp (subject to resourcing) is planned. The Centre has not yet made much use of social networking media, but there are plans to address this in the near future.
- 7.4 There are at present no written policies or strategies guiding CCANW's public relations and marketing work; but a commitment is in place to produce a draft document covering branding and public relations, in late 2010.
- 7.5 The FC's promotion of Haldon Forest Park, mainly via press releases, brochures, in other publications and on websites, was described by FC consultees as relatively limited. There is no particular aim to do significantly more at present, given that any increase in peak visitor numbers could not be accommodated by the restricted car-parking. (This would however presumably not prevent new marketing efforts for non-peak attractions, such as modest-scale evening events or activities targeted at the midweek visitor. The scope might also be extended by any efforts FC were to make to promote the development of public transport links, although given that parking is a key revenue source, there may be little incentive for them to do this).
- 7.6 In the course of 2009-10 there has been a welcome improvement in the extent to which the FC and CCANW refer to each other in their publicity and information materials. While of course there are differences in the respective target audiences, requiring specially tailored marketing, each organisation now routinely carries some more or less standard text about what is generally on offer from the other (and in CCANW's case, this means referring to what is on offer from the HFP as a whole, including the other site partners).
- 7.7 The question would be whether and how this might extend in future beyond standard general statements, to cover more topical featured items. Some scope might lie with press announcements issued by the FC communications staff in the District Office: this would require good processes for consultation and approval of draft copy, and such announcements would always go under FC branding, but CCANW content could from time to time enrich Commission

storylines, while the readership would extend beyond the people CCANW reaches with its own releases. **See Recommendation (ix).**

- 7.8 Reference has been made earlier to the HFP Facebook page, which is used as a publicity and marketing tool for the Park. Among other things this carries information on upcoming events: CCANW is under-reflected in this, and there is a need to provide more information (edited copy, as opposed to raw material) to the FC communications staff who moderate the page (and are enthusiastic to make it dynamic and relevant), in order that this gap can be filled. **See Recommendation (ix).**
- 7.9 Another outlet is the newsletter sent periodically to the 6-700 holders of a "Discovery Pass" (ie season ticket) for HFP. This contains a mixture of news of developments and selected event/activity calendar highlights at Haldon, and it includes items relating to all the site partners. The front page of the summer 2010 edition (Forestry Commission, 2010) featured news of CCANW's funding appeal success and the launch of the "Fashion, Textiles and Environment" programme, together with a CCANW logo and web address. There is however a similar need here for further material to be provided for each edition, again as electronic print-ready copy. **See Recommendation (ix).**
- 7.10 Clearly, audience profile and story priorities will be somewhat different between the FC and CCANW. HFP's catchment is predominantly local, whereas CCANW has an additional constituency at national and international levels, as well as having its particular emphasis on ecological and cultural issues. This very fact however can in itself be a newsworthy angle for FC, celebrating the "cachet" of having CCANW (or, for example particularly notable artists) in HFP's midst. In a similar sense, the FC would like to see a commitment from CCANW to celebrating its partnership with FC and the HFP brand. There would appear to be scope for some straightforward gains in this area, provided mutuality is assured. **See Recommendation (x).**
- 7.11 In extending this principle to the mutual interests of all the site partners, CCANW would be positive about publications or web-pages in the name of HFP which periodically foregrounded some feature coverage of one particular partner, and then rotated this in an equitable way to cover them all in turn over time. Similarly there would be a willingness to contribute on some basis of fair assessment to occasional joint publicity materials, such as a major annual joint advertisement. CCANW has also been happy to be included in generic physical site signage under HFP branding, and it publicises the other partners in its materials. (There is not full reciprocation of this however, with the Ridge Café for example carrying links on its website to Go Ape! and Forest Cycle Hire but not to CCANW).
- 7.12 The case for coordinated or joint marketing is particularly compelling when it comes to fundraising. One instance from which lessons have been learned was the case of approaches made to Ugbrooke Environmental Ltd for funding from the Landfill Communities Fund. The FC applied for funding to install sculptures on the Mamhead Sensory Trail. CCANW made a separate application for another project: Ugbrooke, who were positive, assumed both approaches related to the same proposal and only made one award, paid to the FC. CCANW subsequently made a further three applications to Ugbrooke on different dates, which were all turned down on the continuing misapprehension that the Mamhead sculpture project had been CCANW's.

- 7.13 There will doubtless continue to be instances of each organisation potentially appealing separately to the same sources (eg regional development, education and social development sources), and where either coordination is required or a joint approach may be more successful than individual ones. There are also situations where support from one organisation may assist a funding application being made by the other. The FC produces a letter of support each year for CCANW to use with funders, but it has generally not done so on a tailored basis for particular applications. Apart from the joint approach made to Teignbridge District Council when CCANW was originally becoming established, the FC has tended not to have any involvement in CCANW's dialogues with key funders such as ACE, but is willing to be asked.
- 7.14 CCANW too may sometimes be in a position to influence certain funders in favour of FC proposals. In addition, the Centre staff's professional skills in articulating imaginative visions and in "selling an idea" may valuably reinforce the FC's development of plans and proposals for submission to funders.
- 7.15 Clearly again priorities differ and the aim is not to homogenise, but consultees in the present review in both FC and CCANW considered that opportunities were being missed though a lack of joint marketing and coordinated approaches to fundraising. This issue must be one of the more fundamental litmus-tests of the effectiveness of the partnership; and a recommendation on this is made in section 11 below. **See Recommendation (xi).**

8. Specifying and evaluating the elements of mutual support

- 8.1 Numerous aspects of mutual support provided between the FC and CCANW in the context of their partnership at Haldon have been referred to in the preceding sections of this report. There are some aspects which can be (and have been) quantified in monetary terms, and in CCANW's case this is material to the valuation of the business, for example for fundraising purposes. This section expands on these issues; and also touches again upon the related question of performance assessment.
- 8.2 The Forestry Commission provides no direct funding support to CCANW. In light of HFP's current financial situation and the more general prognosis for public spending (see section 4 above), this is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. The only exceptions might be the theoretical scope for any unspent portions of occasional relevant FC project budgets to be transferred to CCANW for related use. There was an instance of cost-sharing when the Centre was becoming established in 2005: while CCANW funded the capital costs of converting the building it now occupies, the FC contributed to the cost of its roof.
- 8.3 The FC provides considerable support-in-kind to CCANW. Each year, a monetary value is assigned to this by discussion between the Peninsula District Forest Management Director and CCANW's Director; and this figure is part of the secured match-funding that can be cited by CCANW when applying for external funds, if the given funder's application rules allow. For 2009-10 the figure was £37,600, which is the total of separate amounts assigned to each of the following elements:
- Provision of car parking;
 - Provision of other public facilities (eg toilets, picnic area);
 - Impact of on-site café;
 - Staff time: contribution of forest rangers;
 - Staff time: contribution of outreach rangers;
 - Marketing and promotional activities;
 - Use of timber;
 - Use of FC office facilities (eg conference room, photocopier).
- 8.4 One further element which appears to be missing from the list above is the favourable terms of the FC's lease to CCANW of the Project Space building. As a recognition that CCANW made the capital investment (£88,000) in converting the building for active use, the annual rent charged by the FC is discounted by some 45% from the commercial rate that it is assumed could be charged, thus adding another £2,000 to the annual support-in-kind total.
- 8.5 The assumed commercial rent figure may however be an overestimate given current market conditions; and the discount may therefore be less than quoted. CCANW might wish to propose keeping the discount at 45% and hence reducing the rent, if this is the case. There could even be a case for reducing the rent to a peppercorn (with CCANW covering service costs), which is recognised practice for "hosted" charities in other contexts, and could be of political significance externally (including to CCANW's funders) as a symbol of the strength of the FC partnership. CCANW has raised the question of sub-letting the space at nearer-to-market rates for temporary

periods if necessary for financial or programming reasons; but the FC are against this. **See Recommendation (xii).**

- 8.6 The annual discussions arranged for calculation of support-in-kind are potentially an important occasion for more in-depth explorations of the scope and dimensions of mutual support. These could however be supplemented by other dialogues at other times on more specific aspects of the equation, and by some monitoring of whether what is provided in practice matches the annual estimates.
- 8.7 There are numerous occasions during the year when one partner helps the other with specific activities. For example CCANW has given assistance with particular projects in the forest, and the FC has allocated staff time to site works, and for arts events it has organised volunteers to assist with car-parking, waived some evening parking fees and hired additional portable toilets.
- 8.8 Although views differed, some consultees during the present review suggested that there was considerable scope to fix the details of these arrangements in a clearer and more explicit way each time; for clarity as to the division of responsibility (including “who pays for what”), to confirm for FC staff which elements of partner support are officially sanctioned as part of their job remit; and to be able more fully to quantify the extent (and limits) of the support-in-kind being willingly offered. **See Recommendation (xiii).**
- 8.9 At some FC sites elsewhere in the country which host partner activities (whether charitable or commercial), there is sometimes tension over the balance of fairness in arrangements of this kind. An example would be where a partner invests in an event or public attraction, and the parking fees paid by those attending accrue to the FC, and/or act as a deterrent to some people who otherwise might have come.
- 8.10 Most of the major events organised by CCANW take place when the other facilities at HFP (including of course the forest itself) are open and available at the same time, so it is not possible on such occasions to attribute parking revenues solely to the CCANW event, and people can avail themselves of more than just CCANW when they visit. Hence there is not the same scope for perceiving potential unfairness as in the scenario described above.
- 8.11 Events staged in the evening, outside of normal park hours, might present a different case. The demarcation however is not completely straightforward. In the summer, HFP and its car park are open until 7:00 pm. Some evenings can be busy for other reasons, such as cycle races, and in 2010 the Ridge Café began trialling occasional evening openings. The FC has suspended parking charges for these evening openings as it did for CCANW, as mentioned above; but if evening opening became more frequent, free parking would not be offered on every occasion. There may in such circumstances be other ways of negotiating an equitable division of benefits.
- 8.12 Concerning the mutuality of the support relationship, CCANW’s contributions (beyond the redevelopment of the Centre’s building) include perhaps more intangible/unquantifiable elements, such as people’s understanding and valuing of the place, and its many linked environmental, social, aesthetic and experiential narratives. It would however be possible to itemise additional

elements in a similar way to those listed for the FC's contribution, for example:

- attracting visitors and audiences who contribute to site revenues and participate in other activities on offer at HFP;
- installing or assisting with the installation of public interest features (eg artworks) in the forest;
- direct provision of other features for installation in the forest (eg a small oak building, a spiral play sculpture, and local interest interpretation panels);
- advice and guidance on other artistic/aesthetic issues (eg interpretation, trail features);
- raising HFP's profile through marketing and promotional activities;
- enhancing HFP/FC's wider reputation;
- providing design/architecture contacts and inputs on options for buildings/structures;
- facilitating other contacts, eg with community groups for targeted FC events and activities.

8.13 What seems generally lacking from the approaches described above, so far, is any system for coming to a judgement as to whether the expected level of support was in fact delivered in a given year. There does not seem to be a process for assessing whether in practice, for example, the FC's support-in-kind matches, exceeds or falls short of the estimated figure. It would be possible at least to record and cost-out aspects such as staff time more precisely, by reference to the listed categories of support. Assessments of this kind in principle should offer an important performance indicator for the operation of the partnership. **See Recommendation (xiv).**

9. Decision-making on arts-related issues

- 9.1 Preceding sections of this report have discussed FC's and CCANW's aims for what they each individually and both together wish to accomplish overall at Haldon Forest Park. The present section specifically addresses the artistic content of projects and programmes, and the issues that arise on both sides in relation to curatorial aims, accessibility, balance of objectives, standards, quality control and reputation risk management. It then looks at the processes for planning and decision-making on these issues in the particular partnership context at HFP.
- 9.2 Many of these issues arise at other sites too, where arts activities take place on FC land. During the national review of the Commission's involvements with the arts, referred to in section 3 above (Pritchard, 2008), a recurrent question concerned the relative merits of, on one hand, initiatives involving art that may provide a popular amenity and be intellectually and emotionally "safe" (with the risk that it may be superficial, or repetitive, and create less interest); and on the other hand, initiatives involving art that may be more adventurous and challenging, pursuing deeper angles of inquiry and of understanding and new added value (with the risk that it may be shocking, obscure, elitist, or produce other negative responses).
- 9.3 The conclusion reached was that the best strategy is probably not to seek to select one supposedly "optimal balance" of these, but rather to embrace examples from the whole of the spectrum, across the national totality of the organisation's involvements. Rather than some notion of an "ideal" type of involvement that is the "best fit" for the FC in a generic sense, the key determinant would be an assessment of how best to tailor what might be done in a given case to the particularities of its context; and overall perhaps to achieve a "layering" effect. It was perceived that the plurality itself is likely to be a valuable thing to retain.
- 9.4 In cases where the Commission is directly involved itself, offering something of new interest at each site still allows consistency of the "FC brand" to be applied to aspects such as quality, awareness and support services, but helps to avoid imposing any "identikit" franchise-style homogeneity on to the content. Indeed the 2008 review suggested that the Commission, in its involvements in the arts, could expressly aim to excel at facilitating and presenting "sensitive creative responses to individual places".
- 9.5 CCANW sits in this context as one self-governing "flagship" example among the variety of approaches, having a very distinctive role and identity. The very uniqueness of what it offers is frequently said by FC staff to be the thing they prize the most about the Centre's presence in the mix of partnerships at HFP; and its independence of vision (and operational independence too) are integral to this.
- 9.6 This however brings with it inevitable tensions: across the spectrum of activities and judgements relating to the creative and critical content of both organisations' work, there is a centre-ground where the interests and viewpoints of both perfectly coincide, but also a segment where CCANW has done or proposed things which have been challenging for FC, as well as a

segment where the FC has done or proposed things which have been challenging for CCANW.

Key issues from CCANW's perspective

- 9.10 One thesis of the present report is that the “centre-ground” is larger than may have been appreciated by the FC thus far. The extent of the CCANW’s desire to appeal to the full profile of HFP’s visitors, and its work with families, communities, groups with special needs and thousands of schoolchildren every year, coincide strongly with the purposes which the FC itself would articulate for the role of art on the site. (The FC nonetheless retains some scepticism as to the magnitude of the impact in this “overlap area” between the two organisation’s interests).
- 9.11 A key point however is that all of CCANW’s activities form part of an integrated “programme that involves a plurality of approaches” (section 5 above), and it is fundamental that each part of this is coherent with the overall principles and purposes of the organisation, and with its aesthetic, curatorial, environmental and ethical standards (as also discussed in section 5).
- 9.12 In fact this coherence, and the high level of these standards, was commended by an FC consultee as one of CCANW’s key positive distinguishing features among the Forest Park partners. Obviously the aesthetic dimension is particularly linked to CCANW’s core raison d’être; but the other values mentioned above are also part of what the organisation represents, and they are equally part of what would need to be factored in to any assessment of “reputation risk”.
- 9.13 It could be an unhelpful distraction here to attempt a discussion of what is implied by the phrase “contemporary art”, but it may be noted that by its very nature such art is new, exploratory, often (though not always) challenging and full of uncertainties. Section 5 above has referred to the emphasis often lying less with objects and products, and more with ideas, enquiries, experiences, and impacts on outlook and awareness. In many cases the viewer or participant brings as much to the equation as the artist, which offers both heightened challenge and heightened possibility. Good institutional “enablers” of contemporary art need to have ways of absorbing the occasional controversy as part of the creative mix (as indeed have all those down the centuries who first enabled the art we think of now as “traditional”).
- 9.14 Part of the “plurality of approaches” therefore involves the exhibitions, performances, installations, public talks, research, commissioning, arts network-servicing and artist-engagement parts of the Centre’s programme. As discussed in section 5, these are bound together by a strong philosophy which requires that they meet criteria of topicality, relevance, imaginative vision, leadership, originality and quality.
- 9.15 It will be apparent from the above that CCANW’s reputation is heavily based on an integrity of delivery across a multi-dimensional mix of values and standards, some of which are subtle and fine-tuned. One area of risk to this arises from the way in which anything “art-related” in Haldon Forest seemingly tends now to be associated in people’s minds with CCANW, even if the artwork or activity concerned is independently originated by someone else, and even if it is sited or takes place in far-flung parts of the forest.

- 9.16 The Centre is therefore concerned to see that art-related activity by others, including the Forestry Commission, does not lead to damaging misperceptions of this kind. The FC accepts the need for sensitivity in this area. CCANW further believes that some of the principles at stake (environmental sustainability, ethical standards, awareness about the characteristics of forests) should be held in common by the FC and the other site partners in any event, and should thus inform all decisions concerning the operation of the Park. This must depend however on having clear explicit agreements in advance. **See Recommendation (xv).**
- 9.17 Difficulties of this kind have arisen in a few cases; for example:
- the FC's commissioning in 2006 of sculptures and structures on the "Play Trail" and the Mamhead "Sensory Trail": CCANW were reportedly not consulted about the proposal and they found the resulting work problematic, not least because of the use of imported timber (*Robinia* from Germany) just prior to the launch of a programme at Haldon extolling the role and utility of domestic forest products;
 - an FC proposal for an outdoor Shakespeare performance did not find favour with CCANW, because it was felt that it would confuse and damage the hard-won idea of art* at Haldon being innovative or distinctive (*this argument applies to "publicly-presented" art: it would not apply for example to curriculum-based school workshops) (note: the FC are aware of CCANW's reasoning on this issue, but do not accept it);
 - a proposal in 2010 to re-site a giant-sized chair sculpture from Dartmoor to Haldon was opposed by CCANW, who predicted loud criticism of the standard of the work and its derivative echoes of a nationally-acclaimed piece at another FC site (CCANW's stance on this caused some frustration to FC).

Key issues from the FC's perspective

- 9.18 Provision of entertainment, interpretation and interesting (stylistically/aesthetically-stimulating) recreation infrastructure is all part of the FC's core business at HFP, and hence the Commission has internal drivers for making its own good use of the arts in this, where appropriate. There may for example therefore be further occasion to commission sculptures (as currently on the Sensory and Play Trails), whether for functional purposes (benches, play equipment, interpretation panels) or as features in the landscape.
- 9.19 Beyond this, it is a strategic aim of the FC to broaden the range of attractions and activities on offer in Haldon Forest Park overall. Although there are unlikely to be more events organised directly by FC, the Commission is keen to promote the staging of music, theatre and other live performances. FC consultees also suggested other ideas such as establishing a permanent "event space" in the forest, and holding a large festival over several days (CCANW currently hosts the successful one-day "Art in the Park" festival at Haldon each summer).
- 9.20 The FC have concerns that CCANW's goals may not fully chime in harmony with these aspirations for increasing the "mass appeal" of the Forest Park. Sections 5 and 6 of this report may give some comfort in this regard; but although the "overlap zone" of respective interests is probably larger than has

been imagined, there will not be a complete coincidence of priorities. One of CCANW's outdoor music events is recalled by FC staff as having been cause for negative visitor comment by being too obscure and off-putting for some tastes; while it has not yet been possible to find good common ground on doing more "popular" music, theatre and other live performances (see reference above to the Shakespeare example).

Some promising areas of shared interest

- 9.21 Clearly, further negotiations (and possibly some concessions on both sides) may be required on these issues. In the meantime however there are several other areas of opportunity available for fruitful advance.
- 9.22 One such would be simply to have more detailed dialogue about the parts of CCANW's programme that do involve wider groups, bigger audiences and events. The current extent of this appears probably to be not fully evident to at least some of the key FC staff (CCANW's 52 events in 2006-07 comprised over half of those organised in HFP (Anon, 2007)); but in any case, making clear a settled intention to grow this side of the Centre's business further would, it seems, go a very long way to increasing the FC's comfort-level with the overall agenda, and doubtless also their willingness to entertain the more "adventurous" ingredients in the mix. **See Recommendation (xvi).**
- 9.23 Second, there would appear to be a desire on both sides to make greater use of the forest itself as an outdoor location for arts-related activities. Outdoor events have accessibility advantages (see the earlier discussion on issues concerning the "crossing of the threshold"), and works sited in the forest evidently (judging from feedback reported by rangers) resonate very strongly with the public as reference-points, talking-points, a stimulus to explore/engage further, revealers of the surrounding environment, and triggers for memories and for "new folklores".
- 9.24 This has been a core element of the concept of CCANW from its beginnings at Haldon, and there have been successful examples of outdoor forest-based components of the programme (such as Shelley Sacks' "University of the Trees", the re-celebration of Jamie McCullough's "Beginner's Way", Martin Prothero's animal tracking and forest night-watches, Dave Pritchard's "Dendros", Angus Balbernie & Rosalyn Maynard's walking/choreography events, Mike Smallcombe's "Ghosts in the Wood", Alan Sonfist's "Snake", and numerous family and children's workshops).
- 9.25 The demands of running the Project Space and programme elements there inevitably impose some limits on what can be done in the surrounding outdoor environment; but the site itself and its audiences could accommodate more, and there would be a case for setting a general objective in this direction, subject to what capacity might allow. Importantly also in the present context, these are the elements of CCANW's programme which offer some of the most positive and fertile direct interactions between the Centre and the FC's staff. **See Recommendation (xvi).**
- 9.26 A third area is where there is genuine joint working on projects of mutual interest. Good scope for this exists in particular where advice from CCANW can assist with FC activities that may have a creative or aesthetic dimension, and this is welcomed by FC staff. One example is the panel installation by artist Nicky Coutts, which provides interpretation together with a uniquely

thought-provoking artwork. This was commissioned by the FC with CCANW advice; which proved to be a successful symbiotic way of working.

- 9.27 CCANW has been able on several occasions to assist by identifying suitable artists, craftspeople and designers to produce new work required by FC at Haldon. In addition to Coutts, this has included the referral of Robert Kilvington for a large oak bench commission, and of Sean Hellmann who has produced carved waymarkers and number of sculptural works at different times.
- 9.28 Mutual interest has also arisen in relation to work commissioned by CCANW which meets an FC need. A set of exhibits about tree varieties proved so popular that after the CCANW exhibition for which they were made was over, they were installed by the FC on the "Tree Trail". The same was done with information panels about the geology, wildlife, forest management and estate history of Haldon Forest, thus seemingly filling something of a gap in the FC's own provision of interpretation on these issues. These initiatives have been highly appreciated, but have come about largely through informal arrangements and personally-motivated extra efforts on the part of the staff concerned, rather than being part of a "mainstream" joint decision-making process (see below). There may be something of an institutional lacuna here, and potential remaining untapped. (As an example, the panels and other materials used in the particularly pertinent "Wood Culture" and "Haldon's Hidden Heritage" exhibitions still exist, and could be used by the FC for their own public engagement work). **See Recommendation (xvii).**

Decisions about individual projects and activities

- 9.29 Differences of opinion such as those referred to above concerning individual arts-related projects and activities will continue to arise in future, since there is a proper and legitimate difference of perspective and emphasis between the two organisations. The aim should not be to try to eliminate these differences; but rather to have an effective process for arriving at rational and workable agreed outcomes.
- 9.30 A search for consensus in each case about what constitutes "worthwhile art" or "acceptable art" is unlikely to be a successful basis for decisions. Better scope lies with a search for clarity about potential risks and about the "fit" with pre-agreed strategies and criteria.
- 9.31 Both organisations will wish to avoid decisions that harm their interests. It would not be right however for CCANW to protect its reputation by having a blanket power of veto over FC projects, nor for FC to protect its revenues by foisting a project on an unwilling partner.
- 9.32 Part of the key may lie with improving the process by which debate about the more controversial cases is held. Establishing protected time, clear parameters, and an open, constructive climate for this may often require active steps (and periodic refreshing) rather than being assumed to evolve organically. A planned, regular opportunity for dialogue on any specific proposals (catching them at their earliest formative stage, when options can be explored and adaptations are possible) may be the best way of doing this. Cross-representation on relevant planning or management groups (such as the CCANW Board of Trustees) might be worthwhile.

- 9.33 While of course aiming to keep it simple and not to over-bureaucratise things, a second part may then lie with having some framework/menu of criteria, tolerance limits, and options for modifying or mitigating potentially problematic ideas when compromise is needed; by reference to adopted strategic plans, policies and programmes (see “Decisions about programme planning” below). Some initial examples of the kind of criteria that might feature in this, at least as a way of making each organisation’s frame of reference more explicit (and these could all be elaborated further), appear in the paragraphs above on “Key issues from CCANW’s perspective”. Some advance agreement on how to deal with stalemates (mediation, escalation, reversion to last common denominator, etc) may also be required, to be administered as far as possible however with a “light touch”. **See Recommendation (xviii).**
- 9.34 As well as providing a system for negotiating over differences, the approach outlined above should also assist in working out the details of cooperation agreements; such as cost-sharing arrangements, maintenance responsibilities, insurance liabilities (including public safety) and ownership of work (including intellectual property).

Decisions about programme planning

- 9.35 Similar considerations apply to the programme planning level. Both FC and CCANW consultees during the present review welcomed the idea of enhancing dialogue on this, and having more FC engagement in the Centre’s planning process (see also section 10 below). This would provide a very appropriate arena for developing early awareness of ideas and proposals on both sides, testing assumptions, creating synergistic thinking, offering suggestions in time for them to be taken up, and cultivating a richer understanding of rationales and viewpoints in general: all things that will help to support the directions discussed in the preceding parts of this section. **See Recommendation (xix).**
- 9.36 It would also be useful to have a forum in which relevant strategic or policy questions about programme content could be discussed, without necessarily being linked to specific decisions. Examples might include:
- the place of forestry/the FC itself in some thematic narratives (for example CCANW has offered to curate an exhibition marking the Commission’s centenary in 2019, and this could be planned jointly);
 - development of a joint philosophy regarding support for locally-based artists/craftspeople (many of whom have featured centrally in CCANW’s programme as well as being used by FC, while CCANW has been active in local networks such as the Devon open studios programme; although the Centre would not wish to become a commercial outlet for all-comers);
 - subject to the development of closer shared ideas, the use of CCANW as an adviser or agent for arts-related activities which the FC wishes to see realised;
 - consciously choosing the preferred “programme balance”, by further developing the “layered” approach to give a diversity of offerings to different audience-types, thematically linked to the exhibition programme for a given period, and hopefully satisfying both FC and CCANW audience-engagement goals.

10. Liaison and communication

Fundamentals

- 10.1 It would be a truism to say that communication is fundamental to nearly everything in this report; and practically any review of any partnership would be likely to conclude by recommending “more/better communication”! This section attempts to be a little more specific about some of the dimensions of this.
- 10.2 It is also a truism that however good the channels and plans, including whatever endorsement there may be for the points made in this report, the business of relationship-building depends heavily on what happens casually, humanly and informally *outside of* those processes that are consciously arranged. It may also depend on a willingness to make concessions for the greater prize of mutuality. Hence although the paragraphs which follow may concentrate on the “mechanics”, it is crucial to see the question as bigger than that. The most important resources are time (which is limited, but can be creatively handled) and good will (which is limitless, as long as one simply decides to make it so).

Challenges

- 10.3 Reference has been made earlier in this report to the fact that some areas of the day-to-day working relationship between CCANW and FC in recent times have fallen short of the ideal, no doubt under the huge pressures of prevailing economic conditions in 2010. It can also be acknowledged that CCANW has had to adjust to being one among several site partners at HFP from a time when it was the only one in view; and tensions could be expected to arise from occasional perceptions (on different sides) that it is implicitly a “privileged” or “senior” partner, when no such distinctions have been explicitly made. Small irritations, arising either in the context of bilateral dealings with FC or in relation to other partners on the site, can build unnecessarily into systemic disaffection if communication is allowed to slip: in such cases it is the communication that is the real issue, not the (often small) original irritant.
- 10.4 Although the FC in a strategic sense avows the significance of CCANW’s presence to the special mix that HFP represents, at an everyday level its attitude is seen by Centre staff as somewhat indifferent. An “arm’s length” approach might simply signify that the Commission is confident and content to leave CCANW to function as an independent entity; but this report demonstrates that both organisations see more richness in the partnership concept than that. It could be that for some in the FC it is hard to find a point of connection with the work that CCANW does: hopefully some pointers to help with this are provided by the present review.
- 10.5 Whatever the reason, there appears to be a very low level of FC engagement. Rangers have contributed valuable time and energy to certain projects and events; but with one or two exceptions, staff seem rarely to set foot in the Project Space. It is of concern that this seemingly extends to declining invitations to exhibition openings and other public and networking events, thus missing an opportunity both to be exposed to some of what CCANW is about, and to make the fact of the partnership visible to others. There may be

more that CCANW can do to encourage these interactions. Either way, this is an area for attention: not only to commit to improvements, but also to analyse honestly together what real incentives or disincentives have been in play.

See Recommendation (xx).

- 10.6 Not surprisingly therefore there appears generally to be a very low awareness among FC staff (though again with exceptions) about what takes place at CCANW, and misapprehensions have developed. Discussions in the course of the present review revealed that a significant proportion of CCANW's advertised programme had not registered in FC minds, and that views of its true "offer" were coloured accordingly. An exhibition and a workshop in full flow just metres away at the time of the review meetings were referred to by most FC consultees in the past tense! The present report has therefore given a fairly full picture of the Centre's agenda, hopefully as one source of help in this regard.
- 10.7 The scope of this review does not cover the other site partners at HFP, except where this has a bearing on CCANW's position in the multiple partnership as a whole or on the way in which CCANW and FC work together. With some of them (for example the small "Segway" tour operation) CCANW has no contact at all. Other cases vary; and without doubt the most difficult relationship has been with the Centre's immediate neighbour, the Ridge Café.
- 10.8 To say this relationship was frosty would be to put it mildly. The origins lie in a litany of items which CCANW believed were agreed (and with which CCANW offered time and specialist help) concerning the café's architecture and design, the layout of what was intended to be a shared area, the mitigation of invasive smells, and ethical, environmental and health criteria both for building materials and catering menus. The FC point out that action has been taken on many of these items, and in any event there is no sense in forcing a draconian uniformity of outlook among very different loosely-bound partners. The relevance here concerns lessons to be drawn from the communication failures that arose, most likely from a lack of clear confirmation about what was being agreed on any given occasion and about its means of enforceability, compounded by poor levels of routine liaison and lack of a workable forum for decision-making or dispute-resolution among site partners.
- 10.9 Other matters which raise a similar issue about the communication channels for resolving tensions over implementation of agreements include: hazardous interactions between pedestrians and cyclists riding at speed through the Hub (warning signage and enforcement both seem to be inadequate); and control of dogs (in respect of which the rangers themselves do not always set a good example). Both of these were cause for comment in the visitor surveys referred to in section 6 above, and the FC are giving them attention.

Channels and mechanisms

- 10.10 The FC has made efforts to host periodic meetings with all the site partners. With the acknowledged exception of CCANW, attendance by the others has dropped away to zero, causing cancellations, often at the last minute. Those meetings that have taken place have sometimes been dominated by a single interest or problem; and the merging of formerly separate dialogues on general management and on marketing may not have helped.

- 10.11 There are no sanctions available to incentivise the partners to do better than this. Most partners operate under lease agreements with the FC: these include conditions, and they periodically come up for renewal, but there is no annual review or other compliance mechanism. While obviously the preference would be for routine informal low-key interactions to address most matters, in principle, participation in liaison processes should be a condition of being a partner at HFP, and in the absence of formal clauses to this effect, all that remains is stronger persuasion and a search for incentives. Progress on both counts must hopefully be possible. **See Recommendation (xxi).**
- 10.12 The same applies to resolution of tensions and decision-making on specific issues that may be brought to the partners' liaison forum. There is a jointly-adopted code of practice for the site, but it is seemingly not high in most people's consciousness and is not made very visible. It appears generally that decision-making and resolution of tensions among the FC and its partners at HFP relies on negotiation, rather than on any very explicit chain of authority. Such a system can be very effective, but only with a maturity of approach and when a perception of interdependent interests prevails among all stakeholders.
- 10.13 Whether resulting from the vacuum in joint liaison with the partners or from the points about "engagement" made above, the level of bilateral liaison between FC and CCANW is also unsatisfactory. Despite CCANW's urging, no high-level meetings have taken place between the two organisations for several years. It is recommended that the present review be used as the focus for arranging one such before the end of 2010, and that a new process be agreed for maintaining appropriate Director-level contact in future. **See Recommendation (xxii).**
- 10.14 Too much reliance on a structure of regular meetings should also be guarded against: other more frequent, flexible, opportunistic and imaginative communication channels are equally important for fostering good daily mutual confidence and respect, and for avoiding problems coming "out of the blue".
- 10.15 Electronic and print media play a role. Although the current HFP Facebook page is not designed as a communication tool among the site partners; an on-line sharing platform of some kind, such as an extranet, could be developed in future. A "Site Bulletin" is currently produced for those operating at HFP: this is brief, but fills an important gap (social and administrative news, important dates and requests, etc). Staff time (FC) for producing it is severely limited, and it relies on appropriately-edited final copy to be provided direct by the partners. More could and probably should be done with this; although it should not become a substitute for matters that need to be covered in meetings or by other face-to-face contact. **See Recommendation (xxiii).**
- 10.16 No general practice has developed for social mixing to take place among the FC and its partners at HFP. There are various opportunities that could be explored for this (and there is a wealth of professional catering and event-management experience on hand too!). The occasional drinks reception or informal lunch gathering could be organised to mark a celebration, announce a success, welcome new personnel, or showcase a new venture by one of the partners. A regular diary-slot could be earmarked as a relaxed "drop in" social mingling occasion for whoever happens to be on site at the time: for example a 5:00 pm wine & cheese hour on the last Friday of each month, or a coffee & cake hour in the morning. CCANW itself could perhaps create the

ideal opportunity by offering a special dedicated “partners’ preview” of each new exhibition. For the price of a little bravery in “taking the first step”, these or similar processes could be very important for cultivating the essential human side to positive business relationships at Haldon. **See Recommendation (xxiv).**

- 10.17 A final suggestion arises from the fact that in the team of FC rangers at HFP, certain individuals tend to take a lead on particular areas of work (cycling, youth & community groups, wildlife and so on). One ranger, Ian Parsons, has tended to take on a greater share of dealings with CCANW, in part because of a personal enthusiasm for the subject. A consequence is that he is then probably the most well-informed of the staff about CCANW’s work, the most frequently in direct contact with the Centre, and an informal conduit for information in both directions. There would seem to be a case for recognising a more explicit “primary point of contact” function of this kind in future, building from the existing position. **See Recommendation (xxv).**

11. Options and recommendations

- 11.1 Publicly-visited sites managed by the Forestry Commission are increasingly following a model that involves a portfolio of franchises and partnerships with other entities and providers. Contemporary arts organisations are increasingly interested in the social and environmental context for what they do (sometimes indeed as the primary focus of what they do). These two trends find an effulgent convergence at Haldon Forest Park, in the “flagship” partnership between CCANW and the FC. Pioneers, by their nature, learn hard lessons, but those learned at Haldon offer a hugely valuable contribution to some of the necessary new science (or art!) of collaboration, negotiated compromise and creative ways of working in this field.
- 11.2 This section takes the findings of the review and distils from them an agenda of suggested actions for the next stage of this voyage, imagined as roughly a period of ten years ahead. If sections 4 and 5 above set out the respective strategic development visions of the FC and CCANW, the present section aims to point the way to a *shared vision* for what the *partnership itself* should achieve, as a basis for a *joint commitment* to realising it; having regard to the constraints and limitations identified throughout the report.
- 11.3 In principle, a variety of models or scenarios can be imagined as options for the way ahead. Examples (illustrative only, and not necessarily mutually exclusive) could include the following, among others:
- a) CCANW operates at variety of locations, and its HQ is not necessarily at Haldon - collaborations with FC take place there, but as a minority component of an overall programme;
 - b) CCANW is headquartered at Haldon, FC simply acts in the capacity of “hands off” host or landlord, concepts of partnership are played down, CCANW acts with complete autonomy, and with no input to any of the FC’s own “art-related” activities;
 - c) CCANW joins a more full-blown/formalised “group partnership” at HFP, with collective decision-making, joint marketing and literature, common infrastructure services (IT, security, cleaning, maintenance, insurance, visitor services, web-presence, etc);
 - d) FC delegates anything “arts-related” at Haldon to CCANW to run on a contracted agency basis, alongside the Centre’s own programme;
 - e) FC and CCANW have an explicit “joint arts (sub-)programme” (covering eg an annual joint exhibition, an annual joint mini-conference on forests and culture, a joint initiative for promoting local artists/designers working in wood, etc) run on an “equal partners” basis as a sub-set of the rest of what they each do;
 - f) Radical new ideas are explored for achieving commercial and funding success for CCANW and FC through working in partnership, most likely by means of a consultancy study;

- g) CCANW sees HFP as its “seat” location while also operating elsewhere, runs an overall independent programme under independent funding and governance, but is publicly portrayed as a partner of the FC and a partner in the “HFP partners group” brand, cooperating with FC on relevant programme and project issues, sometimes collaborating on joint initiatives, and holding a stake (benefits and responsibilities) in shared services at HFP.
- 11.4 Based on the perspectives discussed in this report, it could be imagined that the FC might have reservations about scenarios (a) and (d), CCANW might have reservations about (c) and (f), and both (for the same or different reasons) might have reservations about (b) and (e). Scenario (g) essentially describes the current construct, and a preferred shared vision for the future might be put forward now as consisting of this construct **plus** enhancements of it; with the enhancements being the implementation of recommendations from this report. The full set of these recommendations is now presented below. (Numbers in brackets indicate the source paragraph for each one).

Recommendations

(Concerning wider experience-exchange)...

- (i) The outcome of the present review should be fed into relevant national-level dialogues on policy and research concerning FC involvement in the arts, and the CCANW partnership used where appropriate as an example case for wider strategic thinking. (3.16, 12.5)
- (ii) A synthesis of information about the different models of arts partnerships with the FC and their strengths and weaknesses would be worthwhile, building on the preliminary characterisations given in section 3 of this report, and in particular enabling a further exchange of lessons with the examples that approach closest to the model operating at Haldon Forest Park. (3.22)

(Concerning visitors, audiences and participants)...

- (iii) The FC and CCANW could jointly seek funding for an all-weather addition to the shelter/stage outside the Project Space, and collaborate over its construction, including equipping it to function additionally as a common visitor information-point for the site (unless this becomes overtaken by plans for fully redeveloped visitor facilities). (5.14)
- (iv) As a next step in its current process of strategic planning for the next decade, CCANW should develop a modest scheme of targets and measures for evaluating performance: in terms of the quality of programme content; the impact on audiences, visitors and participants; and assurance regarding cost-effectiveness, propriety and regularity in the conduct of the organisation’s business. Specific evaluations of individual exhibitions, projects or events could also be commissioned, including the learning of lessons for future work. (5.38)
- (v) CCANW should continue to explore additional methods of actively welcoming more “casually passing” potential visitors into the Project Space, and finding ways to help them overcome the barriers of

uncertainty or perceived formality etc that currently appear to be a deterrent to some. (6.24)

- (vi) The FC, with input from CCANW as appropriate, should further explore the scope for improving non-car access to Haldon Forest Park; whether through seeking funding for shuttle services, advocating relevant routes and schedules to public transport providers, or by other means. (6.34)
- (vii) An initial discussion should be convened between CCANW and FC to establish the extent and nature of each other's holdings of visitor/audience/participant survey data and other feedback of relevance to arts activities at Haldon; and to agree a principle of periodically sharing, analysing and acting upon such data in future. (6.35)
- (viii) A specific discussion should be convened between FC and CCANW to explore opportunities for future collection and analysis of new visitor/audience/participant survey data and other feedback of relevance to arts activities at Haldon. This should cover extraction of maximum benefit as appropriate from nationally organised research, and could also potentially include: mutual design of illuminating ways to use existing opportunities such as event evaluation forms and web-based feedback channels; ensuring that important questions of mutual interest and relevance to the partnership (including those raised by the present review) are factored in to relevant studies; and potentially commissioning a survey that focuses specifically on CCANW. (6.35)

(Concerning public relations and marketing)...

- (ix) CCANW and FC communications staff should meet and agree a plan of enhanced opportunities for coordinated press activity, including potential storylines, accurate "stock texts" concerning the partnership in general, a forward planning calendar of milestone dates, and clear processes and timeframes for consultation, provision of copy, editing and signing-off. Similar agreements should be sought concerning the supply and inclusion of good CCANW material in Haldon Forest Park's web-page, Facebook page, and Discovery Pass-holders' newsletter. (7.7, 7.8, 7.9)
- (x) The FC and CCANW should together commit to a modestly increased degree of mutual profile-raising when opportunities allow: in the FC's case to celebrate more the national/international standing of CCANW and the "cachet" of having the Centre at Haldon; and in CCANW's case to celebrate more the partnership with FC and the "brand identity" of Haldon Forest Park. (7.10)
- (xi) Relevant CCANW and FC staff should meet and agree a plan for enhanced coordination of marketing and fundraising activity, to include: avoiding duplication and conflict between their individual approaches; providing support for each other's individual approaches; sharing intelligence, generating ideas and developing strategies together; producing joint promotional materials; and making joint approaches. (7.15)

(Concerning mutual support)...

- (xii) The FC is invited to consider what flexibility there may be to enhance the terms of its support-in-kind to CCANW concerning the Project Space building, for example buffered utility costs, free maintenance, reduced rents, etc. (8.5)
- (xiii) In addition to the annual discussion between FC and CCANW at which the value of FC's support-in-kind is agreed, similar discussions should take place where appropriate as part of the planning of any significant individual projects and events where staff time, materials, subsidies, advice, site infrastructure or other support is provided from FC to CCANW or vice-versa: for clarity as to the division of responsibility (including "who pays for what" and "who profits from what"); to confirm for FC staff which elements support are officially sanctioned as part of their job remit; and to allow levels of cumulative support to be monitored and compared with the annual calculation. (8.8)
- (xiv) A process should be put in place to record the support-in-kind actually delivered by each partner to the other over the year, so that the cumulative total (in different support categories) can be compared with the previously-agreed expectation for each year. This can then be treated as a performance indicator for the partnership, allowing management adjustments to be made in response as required (as well as validating the figures that are cited for the relevant match-funding element in grant applications). (8.13)

(Concerning planning and decision-making)...

- (xv) CCANW could tentatively develop some suggested "sensitivity standards" to assist with decision-making on activity by itself and by the FC and other site partners at Haldon Forest Park, to facilitate consistent management of reputation risks concerning aesthetics, ethics, environmental sustainability and related issues. (9.16)
- (xvi) CCANW could usefully produce for FC a distilled overview of those parts of its programme that involve "wider groups, bigger audiences and events" (as described in section 9 of this report), as well as those that involve use of the forest itself as an outdoor location. The more specific this can be, the better. Relevant CCANW and FC staff should meet for a specific discussion on this, to confirm a common understanding about their respective interests in these areas of programming and to clarify objectives for their future development. (9.22, 9.25)
- (xvii) The FC and CCANW should explore the scope for expanding and more explicitly recognising the value of synergistic initiatives, such as those which make use of work produced or commissioned by CCANW to meet an FC need at the same time or later (eg re-displaying exhibition materials in different settings, re-siting works in the forest, combining CCANW artwork with FC landscaping or interpretation activity, etc), as well as those where one organisation provides technical skills or contacts to help in realising a project by the other. (9.28)

- (xviii) CCANW and FC should establish a programme of regular occasions for jointly reviewing relevant specific project proposals which may be taking shape at the time, so they can be discussed in their formative stages and solutions agreed for any potentially controversial cases. They should develop for this purpose a “light touch” framework/menu of criteria, tolerance limits, and options for modifying or mitigating potentially problematic proposals, by reference to adopted strategic plans, policies and programmes; and beginning with the suggestions in section 9 of this report. (9.33)
- (xix) The FC and CCANW should identify a forum for joint strategic dialogue on arts-related programme planning, to cover the issues suggested for such a process in sections 9 and 12 of this report, as well as a “master plan” for future capital development and layout/landscaping of the HFP site, options for extending partnership activities to other FC woods in SW England, and other strategic issues as appropriate. This could function through cross-representation on existing relevant fora, such as the CCANW Board of Trustees. (9.35, 12.2)

(Concerning other liaison and communications)...

- (xx) FC staff should make greater efforts to take up invitations to be formally represented at CCANW public events (such as exhibition openings), and to have a greater level of “diplomatic” interaction with CCANW and engagement with its programme more generally. Ways of making this easier/more appealing should be discussed between the two organisations, and good advance notice of dates should always be given. (10.5)
- (xxi) The FC should explore methods of more effectively encouraging the HFP site partners to participate in liaison meetings, making clear (while avoiding a heavy-handed bureaucratic approach) that there is an authoritative expectation that doing so is effectively a condition of partner status at the site; and in addition considering ways in which good attendance might be incentivised (including making the meetings more valuable for all concerned). (10.11)
- (xxii) CCANW and FC should use the present review report as the focus for arranging a high-level bilateral liaison meeting before the end of 2010 to review the state of the partnership and its future directions; and should agree a new process for maintaining appropriate Director-level contact in future. (10.13, 12.1)
- (xxiii) CCANW should make greater use of opportunities to provide pre-edited content for relevant FC-mediated communication vehicles, including the HFP Facebook page and the Site Bulletin. A meeting with communications staff to refresh agreement about planning processes for this would also be desirable. (10.15)
- (xxiv) The FC and CCANW should both take initiatives of the kind described in section 10 of this report to experiment with ways of creating occasions for informal social mixing among the site partners at Haldon Forest Park, *inter alia* as a way of generally improving working relationships. (10.16)

- (xxv) The FC should, with CCANW agreement, investigate the possibility of formally assigning a role of “primary FC point of contact with CCANW” (for day-to-day operational matters) to a suitable named member of staff. (10.17)

(Concerning an overall framework for the partnership)...

- (xxvi) Once CCANW’s future “visioning” process is concluded (late 2010), CCANW and FC should draw up an appropriate Framework Agreement (a Memorandum of Understanding or similar document) to enshrine the key terms of a refreshed joint vision for the way ahead for the partnership, expressing clear shared objectives, setting out respective responsibilities and covering other key issues identified in this report (the report could be attached as an Annex). The Agreement/MoU should also include indicators for assessing performance against targets for both organisations, including outcome targets; and should signpost options for management decisions in response to these. (12.4)

12. Next steps

- 12.1 This report might be seen as the beginning of a process rather than the end of one. Its findings and recommendations will be digested by CCANW and FC, but it may also, as suggested already above, provide the springboard for a specific dialogue between them about future plans, perhaps by means of a workshop convened for the purpose. **See Recommendation (xxii).**
- 12.2 On a more continuing basis, the suggested joint forum for strategic dialogue on arts-related programming at Haldon would provide a mechanism for animating and tracking implementation of actions; and in any event a review of progress after a year on all the matters prompted by this report would seem sensible. **See Recommendation (xix).**
- 12.3 The staff and Trustees of CCANW and the Peninsula Forest District of FC may wish to “adopt” the report as an on-going agenda for the partnership. Some form of expressed commitment to such an agenda may be advantageous, among other things to enshrine a cooperation undertaking that will endure and whose terms will remain clear if, for example, key personnel move on. (Partnerships constructed primarily on the personal good will of motivated individuals are otherwise vulnerable in this respect).
- 12.4 One approach to this could be for CCANW and FC to draw up an appropriate Framework Agreement (a Memorandum of Understanding or similar document), having regard to relevant models operated by the FC elsewhere. This could enshrine the key terms of a refreshed joint vision for the way ahead for the partnership, expressing clear shared objectives, setting out respective responsibilities and covering other key issues identified in this report. It should also include indicators for assessing performance against targets for both organisations, including outcome targets; and should signpost options for management decisions in response to these. The present report could be attached as an Annex. **See Recommendation (xxvi).**
- 12.5 Finally, the issues covered in this review are likely to be of interest to any Forestry Commission staff and others working with them in arts-related collaborations elsewhere in the country, as well as those responsible for national perspectives on these matters. It would be useful to make this report available as a contribution to these wider perspectives, and as a stimulus generally to wider debate and exchange of experiences. **See Recommendation (i).**

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