

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Holy Trinity

Report of: Director of Environment

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Date: 8 January 2019

Chantry Wood Campsite

Executive Summary

This report outlines and appraises various options for the future operation and alternative uses for the Chantry Wood Campsite. The seven options considered are:

- A: Fully refurbish campsite with upgraded facilities
- B: Continue current operation with small facility improvements
- C: Continue current operation without changes to the facilities
- D: Carry out small scale refurbishment to lease area for forest school use
- E: Lease area for forest school use without facility improvement
- F: Return site to grassland/ woodland
- G: Consult on options

The report outlines the current operation of the campsite, which is not financially viable. The campsite provides a very basic camping facility that is suitable for single party bookings. Whilst originally aimed at scout and guide groups, the campsite is now mainly booked by family groups.

It summarises the status of the Chantry Wood Campsite refurbishment project. The current facility is in need of repair and its current operation is subsidised by the Council. This report outlines the reasons for the campsite refurbishment project to address both the state of repair of the campsite facility as well as its operation.

The report also details the feasibility work undertaken, which has identified that the goal of creating a full campsite facility is no longer feasible. This is primarily due to changes in the campsite users in recent years that have made it clear that additional operational staff input would be required in order to minimise negative impacts of the facility on the surrounding landscape, which would limit the expected financial return.

The report identifies option D: Small-scale refurbishment to lease area for forest school use as the preferred option to deliver a financially and environmentally sustainable future for this area of land at Chantry Wood.

The following considerations have been taken into account:

- Current GBC Strategies
- Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan
- Provision of suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANG) at Chantry Wood
- Capital investment options
- Operational cost and potential income
- Impact on the local area (traffic, footfall, disturbances from activities)
- Community benefit and involvement

Recommendation to Executive

- (1) That no further action be taken to develop further the original proposal to fully refurbish the Chantry Wood Campsite.
- (2) That the Option D - the proposal to lease the Chantry Wood Campsite to a Forest School operator, be approved and that the Director of Environment be authorised, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Enterprise and Economic Development, to take such steps as may be necessary to implement this option.

Reasons for Recommendation

- the provision of utility services at Chantry Wood Campsite would be more expensive and more complicated than anticipated to improve the facility;
- there would be significant negative impact on Chantry Wood and Surrey Hills AONB due to the high customer footfall and the expected users of any refurbished campsite facility;
- the cost of additional staff to manage the site reduces the amount of return which could be achieved by the Council from investing in a fully refurbished campsite;
- operating a campsite at Chantry Woods is therefore not a viable business;
- the campsite does not deliver Council core priorities;
- establishing a forest school base would enable the educational community to be involved with Chantry Woods and the Surrey Hills and to view it as an asset for future generations, this is in line with the Guildford Countryside Vision and Play Strategy; and
- a lease with a forest school provider can be put in place to ensure that the Council retains control over the use and development of the land whilst providing an income stream for the Council.

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report outlines various options for the future operation and alternative uses for the Chantry Wood Campsite. The report identifies the preferred option to deliver a financially and environmentally sustainable future for this area of land at Chantry Wood.
- 1.2 This report seeks Executive approval to implement the most advantageous option identified, which is to cease operating the campsite and lease the area to a forest school provider.

2 Strategic Priorities

2.1 Relevant Policies for Chantry Wood

- 2.1.1 The Chantry Wood Campsite is managed as part of Guildford Borough's Countryside Estate. Therefore, options have been appraised on whether they align with the

Council's adopted Countryside Vision, Play Strategy, the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan and SANG provision in the Local Plan.

2.1.2 Whilst the current strategies, including the Corporate Plan and the AONB management plan support the development of local tourism, they are also clear that visitor facilities should not negatively impact on residents, landscape, biodiversity and other recreational activities.

2.2 Countryside Vision statement

2.2.1 The Council's Countryside Vision includes the following Vision Statement:

- Guildford Borough Council aims to manage its Countryside estate to maintain and enhance its landscape, natural capital and ecological value to continue providing benefits for future generations.
- We will work in Partnership with residents and organisations to improve sustainability and to protect our countryside, whilst balancing this with the needs of the rural and wider economy.
- Guildford's natural environment and landscapes will form part of the overall provision of Surrey's ecosystem services, creating a coherent network, for people, recreation and wildlife, through supporting the implementation of traditional management.

2.2.2 In support of the Natural Environment White Paper Government's Natural Environment White Paper (The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature, 2011), the Council's Countryside Vision has adopted the following objectives:

- Guildford's Countryside Sites provide an outdoor recreation resource for sustainable and managed recreation activities outside the Thames Basin Heath SPA to ensure visitor pressure does not damage what we have.
- The management of GBC's Countryside engages the community by providing an educational resource and enabling and supporting volunteering.

2.2.3 The following policies for the management of Guildford's Woodland apply:

- We will manage public access to prevent conflict of uses through designation of walking, riding and cycling areas
- We will protect ancient and ancient semi natural woodland from inappropriate uses and inappropriate management

2.3 Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

2.3.1 Chantry Wood is one of the Council's strategic SANG (suitable alternative natural greenspace). The SANG of the site capacity is discounted due to existing visitor numbers at the time of designation, including the campsite facility. The Council's Local Plan requires that the SANG does not incur any further discounts from the proposals.

2.4 Play Strategy

2.4.1 The Council's Play Strategy highlights the importance of green spaces for provision of play areas. It includes the following future priorities for which natural play plays an important role:

- widening accessibility and participation in play

- to advocate for play
- improve children's health and wellbeing through play
- balancing risk in play

2.5 Surrey Hills AONB

2.5.1 The Chantry Wood Campsite is located in the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The impact of the proposals on the character of the AONB and its purpose to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, have been taken into consideration. The aims of the AONB management plan include extending and linking woodland and hedgerow habitats for landscape, nature conservation, recreation and educational purposes. For recreation, it outlines the aim for the Surrey Hills to be enjoyed and cherished as an AONB for its own intrinsic qualities and in ways that contribute to the local economy and that are sensitive to the impact on local communities and the environment. The following AONB policies support this aim:

- Visitors and visitor facilities will be encouraged where they benefit the local economy and enhance people's health, enjoyment and understanding of the Surrey Hills, whilst respecting the landscape character and biodiversity.
- The quiet enjoyment of the Surrey Hills will be protected. Recreational activities which threaten these qualities will be assessed and suitable management measures implemented in order to minimise danger to other users, damage to the environment, reduce the inconvenience to residents and ensure there are tangible benefits to the community and local economy.

3 **Background**

3.1 Location and facilities

3.1.1 Chantry Wood is located south of Guildford in the Surrey Hills AONB. It is the largest woodland owned by Guildford Borough Council. The campsite is situated in an area known as Five Fields at the top of the woodland, offering outstanding views over the Tillingbourne Valley.

3.1.2 The site is freely accessible to any users of the woods and is well used by walkers and visitors.

3.1.3 Access to the site from Halfpenny Lane is via a winding 250m track through the woodland. The track is not suitable all year round for car access.

3.1.4 The campsite has been running for over 50 years with very basic facilities.

3.1.5 The facilities include:

- Separate male and female toilet blocks on site. These are supplied with chemical toilets that customers empty into a septic tank themselves before leaving the site. Due to the fact customers have to empty the chemical toilets, the campsite is only let to one group at a time.
- A barn, where toilet cleaning tools and firewood are available to campers. A closed section of the barn is used for storage by the Council's countryside team.
- Two outside cold water taps.
- Two large concrete fire pits.
- Customers who bring vehicles on to the site are able park anywhere they like.

3.2 Current Operation

- 3.2.1 The Chantry Wood campsite is open all year round and is available to individuals or groups of people numbering less than 100.
- 3.2.2 At present, the Council's Ranger Service arranges to meet a representative of the campers to provide access and explain campsite rules and procedures, including use of the toilet facilities. The Ranger Service will also collect rubbish from the campsite when occupied, provide firewood and clean the toilets after occupation.

3.3 **Current use**

- 3.3.1 The main user-groups of the campsite have historically been school groups. However, there is an increasing demand from other customers as well as for commercial activities. In recent years, approximately five school/scout groups visit annually, with the remainder of bookings made up by family groups. The school groups represent around a quarter of the customers. Current school bookings are regular rather than new customers as group leaders are generally reluctant to empty the chemical toilets.
- 3.3.2 Daytime bookings for use as a forest school and children's birthday party venue, without overnight stays, are increasing. There are approximately 10 daytime bookings per year at present.
- 3.3.3 The setting of the site can cause issues such as noise nuisance and commercial activities and loud music are not permitted. However, this is difficult to control without a permanent presence of staff.

3.4 **Current operational costs**

- 3.4.1 The price per night was reduced in 2013-14 from £6.10 to £3 per night after a bench marking exercise revealed this was too high for the facilities on offer and customers were not returning. Since then prices have increased with inflation (2018: £4.75 incl, VAT), as has usage.
- 3.4.2 Visitor numbers were 1,263 in 2017. This is a decline from 1,898 in the previous year due to decline in school bookings and increase in small group bookings.
- 3.4.3 The campsite has incurred an increasing net cost over the past three years as detailed in Table 1 below, which is partly due to necessary maintenance work.

Table 1

Year	Income	Expenditure	Net costs
2015-16	£4,023	£5,398	£1,375
2016-17	£5,031	£7,275	£2,244
2017-18	£4,695	£9,354	£4,659

3.5 Achieving Strategic Goals with current operation

- 3.5.1 The current operation of the campsite and its limitations for single party use largely attracts repeat customers from the local area, although we do receive some bookings from customers from other areas.

3.5.2 Therefore, the campsite's contribution to developing local tourism can be considered negligible.

3.5.3 The current operation also limits the opportunities to enhance the campsite as a local outdoor education facility, which would contribute to national targets to re-connect people/ children with the natural environment as well as encouraging natural play.

3.6 Need for Improvement and Business Potential

3.6.1 The need to refurbish the basic campsite facilities, that reached their expected operational life, was first identified in 2009. This presented an opportunity to broaden the appeal of the campsite to a wider audience by providing a sustainable toilet block with showers.

3.6.2 From 2014, we developed detailed proposals that allow multiple group bookings and provide sufficient water and power supply to the campsite.

3.6.3 In the past, the customer base at the Chantry Wood campsite has been made up of Scout/ Guide Groups or similar, who do not mind the basic facilities and value the opportunity to experience outdoor life close to nature.

3.6.4 Other campsites that focus on scout groups in Surrey are listed in Appendix 1. Most sites have lower or similar pricing structure, but offer better facilities.

3.6.5 Whilst the Chantry Wood campsite's strong feature is the beautiful location, the facilities are not in line with modern camping standards and can be challenging to manage. There is potential for this site to offer a more attractive facility for a wider range of customers and thereby increase the numbers of people staying at the campsite and experiencing this AONB.

3.6.6 Market research has been commissioned recently by Surrey County Council to consider the business opportunities for the campsite at the Basingstoke Canal Centre. This research identified that there was demand for a leisure campsite in the area and not many sites to fulfil the demand. Most campsites in the local area are orientated towards touring caravans rather than tent camping. The research concluded that an average occupancy rate of 25-35% is realistic for the local area, with most users likely to come from the South East. We can assume that these figures are realistic for Chantry Wood.

3.6.7 New facilities that remove the current constraint of single party use could allow for any number of individuals or groups up to a maximum of around 50 people per night.

3.6.8 The demand from private/ individual customers to use the current campsite facility has been increasing over recent years. In contrast, bookings from organisations such as schools and scout groups have stagnated and are slowly declining.

3.6.9 There are various reasons for this; however, the need for customers to empty toilets has deterred new schools from booking the campsite. This would also suggest that the current facilities have a limited customer base, although these customers value the appeal of very basic infrastructure.

3.6.10 Various landowners, including Surrey Wildlife Trust, in Surrey consider that the business potential in the county is luxury camping with high-end facilities and/ or private secluded sites, something the Chantry Wood Campsite cannot offer.

Examples include the Surrey Hills Yurts and Knepp Wildland. There is local opposition to some proposals.

3.6.11 In recent years, it has become apparent that new rules for users of the campsite need to be introduced in order to prevent nuisances to visitors to Chantry Wood and residents as far away as Chilworth.

3.6.12 A fully refurbished campsite that caters for a large variety of visitors would require additional staff resources for cleaning, bookings, general presence on site and visitor management of the woodland.

3.7 Existing Refurbishment Plan

3.7.1 The original budget was £110,000 funded from various S106 agreements. The design aimed at creating an exemplar sustainable facility that provides sustainably powered showers and washing up areas, refurbished toilets and a heated indoor space.

3.7.2 Additional works were considered at the time, but not included in the original budget estimate. Those were:

- Reinforced grass parking area
- Refurbishment of the barn for indoor use by campers
- Access road improvements

3.7.3 For the future options appraisal, we have taken into account that implementation of the above would be necessary for a facility that aims to attract a wide-ranging audience.

3.7.4 The feasibility work identified a number of constraints (see section 3.8 below) to delivering full facilities in the current location. This has significantly increased the cost estimate. In particular, after considering options for the energy supply it was concluded that connection to the main electrical power network would be required to operate a fully equipped campsite.

3.7.5 On 19 January 2016, the Executive approved a revised budget of £216,000, of which £116, 000 was to be funded through S106 agreements.

3.8 Constraints

3.8.1 Permissions:

- I. The Property Deeds include a covenant which means future use needs to retain the public access in the same way as the current campsite operation.
- II. Planning Permission for change of use would be required for a change of use of the buildings and changes to the building footprint or dimensions.
- III. A planning application would be assessed against guidance on development in the Green belt and the Surrey Hills AONB.
- IV. Building Control Approval would be required for major alterations to buildings and the supply of water and electricity to a modern day standard. This requires the provision of sufficient water pressure and reliable energy supplies for any proposals that involves additional water and energy consumption.
- V. Protected species and Woodland Habitat; A recent bat survey for the barn at the campsite has identified small daytime bat roosts in trees and the building and the

possibility of winter roosts. Works on the building would need to retain those roosts which would affect design and timing of works.

- VI. A campsite licence would be required for proposals that include an increase in visitor numbers and would therefore exceed the threshold for exemption.

3.8.2 Operational:

- I. The current track restricts access, and proposals that require access for large plant or increased traffic would require a major upgrade to the track, which would affect mature trees. The impact of increased traffic through the woodland on other site visitors would represent both a nuisance and a safety hazard.
- II. The existing building is structurally weak. Significant structural works would be required in order to allow a major upgrade in facilities.
- III. Water pressure is low and the current supply pipe is not sufficient for additional water outlets, including toilets. There is no electricity supply to the campsite and consequently no facility for hot water.
- IV. The lack of infrastructure limits the options of re-building the existing toilets to remove the need of using chemical toilets. A new build would require compliance with building regulations including lighting.
- V. Noise/ Visual intrusion/ Environmental impacts:
 - i. Potential noise can be heard across the Tillingbourne Valley.
 - ii. Car parking areas should not be visible from across the Surrey Hills views.

3.8.3 Costs and income:

- I. Despite the investigation to explore the most cost effective options to install new facilities, the project costs have increased.
- II. The installation of sufficient infrastructure has proved difficult. In particular, the investigations to provide a power supply and drinking water in quantities that allow operating washrooms and shower facilities identified that an upgrade of water supply beyond the current road connection is required.
- III. The full refurbishment cost (excluding upgrade of the access track) are now estimated at £280,000, with currently £209,000 available from existing S106 agreements and a capital bid.
- IV. This increase in cost could be in theory met by a marketing campaign and increase in visitor numbers to the refurbished campsite facilities. It is reasonable to expect that the better the facilities the broader the potential user group and in turn the higher the income. However, this would also require a higher standard of site maintenance and additional staff resources.
- V. We need to consider the setting and location of the campsite and the impact of its operation on the wider environment. The current and anticipated future use are aimed at a low level impact on Chantry Woods and the Surrey Hills AONB.
- VI. The increased refurbishment costs require a level of visitor numbers that would turn the campsite into a commercial operation that would not be suitable for its setting within the woodland and the Surrey Hills AONB, including traffic through the woodland.
- VII. There is a current trend of camping moving “up market” facilities which may limit potential customers.

4 Options Appraisal

4.1 Review of options

- 4.1.1 The Chantry Wood campsite is currently run at a cost to the Council. In addition, further repairs are needed, and the present operation is not economically viable.

- 4.1.2 In an attempt to refurbish the campsite and increase its economic potential, officers have come across a number of obstacles that have increased the original estimate of investment costs and consequently the required number of bookings in order to achieve a return on the investment.
- 4.1.3 Therefore, officers have carried out a review of future options of the campsite area in order to maximise both financial and environmental benefits.
- 4.1.4 The review of the campsite operation provides an opportunity to support the delivery of national policy goals for access to nature, outdoor education and encouraging future generations to value the countryside and active lifestyles.
- 4.1.5 A small number of campsite users would be affected by the proposals and this may find resistance against the implementation of the most sustainable option and preferred option to lease the area to a forest school operator.
- 4.1.6 Officers expect, however, that the majority of users of the Chantry Wood SANG welcome proposals that reduce traffic and noise impacts of the area.

4.2 Options

- 4.2.1 Table 2 on the following page provides an overview of the options considered, including capital and revenue cost, policy compliance, constraints and impact/benefits of the proposal.
- 4.2.2 Appendix 2: Options in detail provides further details on each option considered. It describes each option, the work done to assess financial viability, the expected impact and the risks.
- 4.2.3 The following options were considered:
- A: Fully refurbish campsite with upgraded facilities including toilets, kitchen, washroom and showers.
 - B: Continue current operation with small facility improvements, e.g. new toilets and washing facilities
 - C: Continue current operation including small scale refurbishment, but without changes to the facilities.
 - D: Carry out small scale refurbishment to lease area for forest school use (preferred)
 - E: Lease area for forest school use without facility improvement
 - F: Return site to grassland/ woodland
 - G: Consult on options above
- 4.2.4 The options appraisal concludes that options A and B could have a significant negative impact on the local environment and the Surrey Hills AONB, and consequently are not in line with policy.
- 4.2.5 Options D and E provide new opportunities to support policies on educational access, community involvement and natural play.
- 4.2.6 The financially most advantageous options are D and E (Lease to Forest School Operator), whilst options A, B and C are not considered to be financially sustainable.

- 4.2.7 Officers have discussed the commercial potential of options D and E with Forest School Operators. Forest School operators have expressed in interest in options D and E, and have provided guideline figures to allow assessing the business model for both options.
- 4.2.8 These discussions have also identified the potential for continued overnight camping for schools or scout groups, subject to commercial viability.

4.3 Options Appraisal Summary

A: Fully refurbish campsite with upgraded facilities including toilets, kitchen, washroom and showers. Capacity: 25 pitches/ units, max 100 people. Estimated visitor numbers: up to 6,000/ annum			
Financial	Policy compliance	Constraints	Impact/ Benefits
Capital investment: £313,000 Estimated annual expenditure: £25,000 Potential income: £27,500 Annual net income: £2,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Local tourism • Negatively impacts on landscape and recreational activities incl public access • Encourages inappropriate uses in ancient semi natural woodland and bluebell habitat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May conflict with the covenants on site • Impact on local area requires mitigation, new staff resources, occupancy restrictions • Access to site for works and customers: additional capital contingency required • Cost to implement utilities • Bat roosts in buildings and trees • Planning permissions, Building Regulations, Campsite licence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows multiple party bookings and opens the campsite facility to a wider audience • Increased traffic through woodland and local roads to up to 50 car journeys per peak day. Increased safety and environmental impact, requires upgrade of access track and will have significant impact on the trees in this area • Likely disturbance on other site users and local residents and visual impact on AONB • Potential decrease in SANG capacity • Limits the opportunity for school and community group use. • Small operational profit • Low return on investment
B: Continue current operation with small facility improvements This option includes refurbishment of the toilets in order to allow two parties to book at the same time and provide hand washing facilities. There would be no electricity supply at the campsite. An upgrade of the water supply to the site is not included, which limits the number of washing facilities and retains the need to empty the chemical toilets. Capacity: 2 units, up to 100 people. Estimated visitor numbers 2,500/ year.			
Financial	Policy compliance	Constraints	Impact/ Benefits
Capital investment: £58,500 Estimated annual expenditure: £12,000 Potential income: £10,000 Annual net expenditure: £2,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Local tourism • In line with Policies on Landscape, Biodiversity, Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The replacement of the toilet requires building control approval, which is unlikely to be obtained without electricity supply. This would make this option undeliverable. • Operation of two party bookings may not be feasible, for example safeguarding issues • Access to site for works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less impact on Chantry Wood and the AONB than option 1, review of conditions required. • Uses existing utility infrastructure • It is expected that any increase in visitors would be through family bookings and this may limit the opportunity for school use • Potential decrease in SANG capacity

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning permissions, Campsite licence • Bat roosts in buildings • Additional staff resource to manage increase in bookings • Infrastructure and utilities will require repair and replacement in future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option will not achieve cost recovery, and will remain a subsidised operation.
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C: Continue current operation without improvements

This option would require essential safety works to the barn and refurbishment of the toilets. including small scale refurbishment, but without changes to the facilities. The current operational system of one party only booking would remain. Capacity: 1 unit, up to 100 people. Estimated visitor numbers 1,500/ year.

Financial	Policy compliance	Constraints	Impact/ Benefits
Capital investment: £36,000 Estimated annual expenditure: £10,000 Potential income: £5,000 Annual net expenditure: £5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Local tourism • In line with Policies on Landscape, Biodiversity, Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to site for works • Bat roosts in buildings • Planning permissions, Building Regulations, Campsite licence (advisable) • Infrastructure and utilities will require repair and replacement in future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor numbers and their impact on the woodland and SANG remain unchanged. • Uses existing utility infrastructure • No change from current subsidised operation.

D: Carry out small scale refurbishment to lease area for forest school use (preferred)

Lease the current campsite and surrounding areas to a Forest School provider as educational facility. The current toilet blocks would be refurbished as in option C. An upgrade of the water supply to the site is not included, which limits the number of washing facilities and retains the need to empty the chemical toilets. The constraints have been discussed with potential forest school providers. Capacity: Forest school could operate up to 5 days a week, 8-24 children.

Financial	Policy compliance	Constraints	Impact/ Benefits
Capital investment: £36,000 Estimated annual expenditure: £1,000 Potential income: £8-10,000 Annual net income: £7,000 – 9,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports National and Local Policies on re-connecting people with Nature • Supports Policies on Landscape, Biodiversity, Recreation • Encourages natural play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to site for works • Bat roosts in buildings • Planning permissions and Building Regulations • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-sufficient and low impact on woodland and AONB (Forest schools already in Chantry Woods) • Uses existing utility infrastructure • Supports community involvement and education • Promotes value and awareness of Woodland and Countryside • Opportunity to increase nature area • Potential to retain camping options for scout groups etc.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced traffic in woodland • No impact on SANG capacity • Generates income
E: Lease area for forest school use without facility improvement. The constraints have been discussed with potential forest school providers.			
Financial	Policy compliance	Constraints	Impact/ Benefits
Capital investment: £17,000 Estimated annual expenditure: £1,000 Potential income: £5,000 Annual net income: £4,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports National and Local Policies on re-connecting people with Nature Supports Policies on Landscape, Biodiversity, Recreation • Encourages natural play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to site for works • Bat roosts in buildings • Planning permissions and Building Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As option D above •
F: Return site to grassland/ woodland			
Financial	Policy compliance	Constraints	Impact/ Benefits
Capital investment: £8,000 Estimated annual expenditure: £0 Potential income: £0 Annual net expenditure: £0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Policies on Landscape, Biodiversity, Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to site for works • Bat roosts in buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases usable woodland area for visitors • Biodiversity Benefits • Reduced disturbance to Woodland tranquillity • No impact on SANG capacity • Operational cost covered by exiting woodland management budget.
G: Consult on options			
Financial	Policy compliance	Constraints	Impact/ Benefits
Consultation cost in addition to chosen option above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Policies on Landscape, Biodiversity, Recreation 	Dependent on outcome of consultation Further resources required in addition to above Delay in delivery of above. May not support best use of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The future impact will depend on the outcome of the consultation. • Require further resources in addition to the options above. • Delay delivery of chosen option by a season.

5 Legal implications

- 5.1 Title of the campsite land and surrounding area was purchased by the Council on 4 February 1938. The conveyance contains restrictive covenants which will require further investigation and legal advice prior to any disposal of the land.
- 5.2 In addition, the campsite land and surrounding area is designated as green belt land pursuant to a Deed dated 7 April 1942. The Deed limits the use of the land and details consents which are required for any disposal of this land.
- 5.3 Planning permission will be required to change the use of the land. Building on the land is limited by its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

6 Consultations

- 6.1 Other than advance notification to local ward councillors that this matter was due to be considered by the Executive at this meeting, no consultations have taken place with regard to these proposals.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The current operation of the Chantry Wood campsite is not economically viable.
- 7.2 The campsite refurbishment project has been set up with the aim to invest in a local facility that achieves a financial return to the Council. Investment is required to refurbish the present facilities and S106 funds were set aside to make significant additional improvements.
- 7.3 There are currently seven S106 schemes within the Holy Trinity Ward that are set aside for the campsite refurbishment scheme, totalling £109,561. In addition, the current Capital Programme includes £100,000 for the refurbishment of the Chantry Wood Campsite.
- 7.4 There is currently a funding shortfall for the delivery of option A. Options B – F could be delivered from existing S106 funds, and would also allow delivery of other projects in the Holy Trinity Ward.
- 7.5 The options appraisal identified option D 'Carry out small scale refurbishment to lease area for forest school use' as the most sustainable and financially viable option.

Table 3: Financial summary of options:

Option	Capital	Annual Expenditure	Income	Annual operational cost/ (income)
A: Fully refurbished campsite with upgraded facilities	£313,000	£25,000	£27,500	(£2,500)
B: Continue current operation with small facility improvements	£58,500	£12,000	£10,000	£2,000
C: Continue current operation without improvements	£36,000	£10,000	£5,000	£5,000
D: lease area for forest school use with small scale refurbishment (preferred)	£36,000	£1,000	£8-10,000	(£7-9,000)

Option	Capital	Annual Expenditure	Income	Annual operational cost/ (income)
E: Lease area for forest school use without facility improvement	£17,000	£1,000	£5,000	(£4,000)
F: Return site to grassland/ woodland	£8,000	0	0	0
G: Consult on options	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

7.6 An estimated £12,000 of S106 funds would still be required to replace the water connection to the cattle troughs at the Chantry fields. This requires less investment than a water connection that would deliver a water supply to showers and washing facilities with appropriate pressure as it does not require upgrade of the water pipes in Halfpenny Lane.

7.7 The access track to the campsite will require repairs. Work will be financed from the SANG management budget. Options that include increased volumes of traffic would incur significant additional cost.

8 Human Resource Implications

8.1 Option A will require additional staff resources of approximately 0.5FTE. Option D-E will free up approximate 0.2 FTE in the ranger team's seasonal staff requirement.

9 Conclusion

9.1 Officers recommend that the original proposal to fully refurbish the campsite is not developed further.

9.2 The present location of the campsite has proved to be a significant factor in the refurbishment cost, especially the provision of utility services.

9.3 High footfall on a refurbished campsite is likely to provide significant negative impacts on the Chantry Wood and Surrey Hills AONB, whilst only providing a small return on the investment.

9.4 Other options were considered for further development with the following considerations taken into account:

- Capital investment
- Operational cost and potential income
- Impact on the local area (SANG capacity, traffic, footfall, disturbances from activities)
- Community benefit and involvement

9.5 Officers recommend developing the proposal to create a base for a Forest School operator at the Chantry Wood Campsite (Option D).

9.6 The options appraisal identified Option D Leasing the site to a forest school operator as the commercially best option.

9.7 The creation of a forest school base would support the aims of the Council's Countryside Vision, the Council's Play strategy and Surrey Hills AONB management

plan to conserve the area's natural beauty, preserve its biodiversity and promote opportunities to promote outdoor play and awareness of the countryside.

- 9.8 This option would allow educational community involvement that develops an understanding and appreciation of Chantry Woods as an asset for future generations and supports national policies on access to nature.
- 9.9 Creation of a forest school facility retains public access, uses existing utilities and would be self-sufficient, thus reducing operational costs.
- 9.10 A lease arrangement would provide control over activities on site, as there would be a single point of contact rather than a number of individual customers.
- 9.11 This report recommends that the Executive agree to developing Option D which is to cease operating the campsite and lease the area to a forest school provider for the following reasons:
- the provision of utility services at Chantry Wood Campsite would be more expensive and more complicated than anticipated to improve facility;
 - there would be significant negative impact on Chantry Wood and Surrey Hills AONB due to the high customer footfall and the expected users of any refurbished campsite facility;
 - the cost of additional staff to manage the site reduces the amount of return which could be achieved by the Council from investing in a fully refurbished campsite;
 - operating a campsite at Chantry Woods is therefore not a viable business;
 - the campsite does not deliver Council core priorities;
 - establishing a forest school base would enable the educational community to be involved with Chantry Woods and the Surrey Hills and to view it as an asset for future generations, this is in line with the Guildford Countryside Vision and Play Strategy; and
 - a lease with a forest school provider can be put in place to ensure that the Council retains control over the use and development of the land whilst providing an income stream for the Council.

10 Background Papers

- GBC Countryside Vision
- GBC Play Strategy
- Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan

11 Appendices

- Appendix 1: Campsites in Surrey
Appendix 2: Options Appraisal in Detail
Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment