Impact Assessment:
PACCAR Scout Camp
Final Report

Planning Solutions Consulting Limited
March 2019
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Executive Summary

Planning Solutions Consulting Ltd (PSC) were commissioned to produce a report on potential risks to PACCAR Scout Camp due to their experience and expertise in the tourism, leisure and recreation sector, including activity centres. PSC is a specialist leisure and tourism consultancy with direct commercial experience in the sector. This report has been produced as a result of extensive research and industry comparisons in line with the aforementioned expertise.

The report has looked at the impact of removing the land adjacent to PACCAR Scout Camp from the green belt and any resulting development. In this instance the assumption was based on the land being developed for residential dwellings.

The report has canvassed opinion form a wide range of parties, users of PACCAR Scout Camp both past and present, industry experts and Managers and Chairmen of similar Centres.

In compiling our report, we have also carried out extensive financial research, and amassed a large amount of data which is factual rather than based on ‘opinions’ or ‘assumptions.’

The evidence contained in the report concludes that the current risks to the operation of PACCAR and to its visitors is at an acceptable level. With a residential development on the land adjacent, the usage of the site will decline (as confirmed within the primary research) and the risk rises to an unacceptable and unsustainable level. The site will become unviable in a short space of time and would face the inevitability of closure.

PACCAR Scout camp is a charity, it is a volunteer run centre (with over 130 regular volunteers the majority of whom give one weekend a month) and services the Youth Sector, mainly Scouts and Guides. It relies on its secluded nature and it is that which is the main factor in its success and longevity (it has been operating since 1938).

The risk from safeguarding issues of introducing a residential development close by is too great: the lack of privacy, increased risk of trespass, theft, vandalism, and unauthorised access to the centres’ adventurous activities such as climbing walls and zipwires would be too much for the Centre to withstand.
Referred to in the report and appendices are examples of other centres that have failed when housing has grown alongside them. The report also contains detailed financial data showing how a modest drop in visitor numbers will make the site unviable.

Given the high fixed cost base this will signify that the whole centre will become a loss-making concern with a trading deficit and no potential funds to allocate to ongoing improvements, refurbishments and new capital programmes. Ultimately this completely changes the whole operation into a non-viable entity which could not support such losses over a sustained period.

The resulting conclusion is that if the land under Option 8 were to be released from the Green Belt it would result in the closure of PACCAR Scout Camp.
1.0 Introduction

This paper sets out the main impacts on the operation and business activities of PACCAR Scout Camp if the proposal for a substantial housing development is allowed to proceed on adjacent land (based on proposals referred to as Option 8).

Our work is based on a review of the site and its activities, our own commercial experience as specialist leisure and tourism consultants and a detailed primary research exercise among scout leaders who book residential activity experiences at PACCAR and parents of children who attend PACCAR.

As part of our work we have reviewed the site’s history and subsequent development phases, its activities and operation. We have also evaluated and referenced the strategic role of outdoor recreation sites to health and wellbeing of young people (Section Two).

The primary research is presented in Section Three along with key conclusions and implications both during construction and once the new housing is in situ (if Option 8 proceeds).

Section Four references two comparable sites which have experienced a range of issues relating to the introduction of nearby housing development.

Section Five sets out the financial profile of PACCAR Scout Camp and highlights the high fixed cost base and the vulnerability of the centre to a significant reduction in trading activity.

Section Six provides concluding comments.
2.0 The PACCAR Site and Operation

2.1 Background and history

The original site was donated to the Scout Association 1938 as a base for scouts to camp by the local Amersham District Council (as was) and encompassed about 23 acres including the main field and the top part of Hogtrough Woods. The site is situated on the ridge between Chalfont St. Peter and the River Colne in a very attractive countryside setting.

The site was added to in 1971 with additional woodland space and again in the mid-80s to give the total site size today of approximately 70 acres. From the early part of the 1970s the site was managed by the national Scout HQ.

In the early part of the 00s, National Scout Association Headquarters drew up a strategy to consolidate its estate holdings to allow it to invest in a smaller number of centres by selling off the remaining sites. This was largely in reaction to holding an overall estate requiring significant capital investment to replace and rebuild buildings which either were dilapidated or did not meet modern visitor expectations. The site (then called Chalfont Heights Scout Camp) was earmarked to be sold and the local Greater London Middlesex West Scouts took an option to purchase the site and set about fundraising. In 2007, the purchase of the site was sealed by a donation from the PACCAR Foundation in return for naming rights at which point the site became known as PACCAR Scout Camp Chalfont Heights.

Since 2007, the site has benefitted from the addition of new bunkhouse facilities, crew accommodation unit, activity tower, archery and rifle ranges, caving feature, high ropes, zip wires and tomahawk throwing activities. Over this period, the site has grown in use by approximately 500% and now serves tens of thousands of young people from across the West London and Buckinghamshire areas and further afield.

2.1 Site usage

In usage terms the growth of the site is shown in the chart below by the number of hours of activities delivered to young people.
Multiplying the number of hours by 15 represents the number of participants in those activities. This signifies that PACCAR involves more than 50,000 young people in Outdoor Activities every year and is continuing to grow (please see table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activities (Hours)</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1,873</td>
<td>28,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2,252</td>
<td>33,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2,485</td>
<td>37,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,493</td>
<td>37,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2,839</td>
<td>42,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3,383</td>
<td>50,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>3,606</td>
<td>54,090</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of overnight experiences rises in a similar way to the number of activities – note that the below is the number of group/nights that have visited (please see line graph and table below).
More modest growth in these figures demonstrates the extent to which the site is used and the limited scope for further growth because of capacity. This also helps to reinforce that the ability to mitigate the impact of any additional development on the site boundaries is limited because it is not possible to just move away from those borders without having an impact on the total number of young people accommodated.

### 2.2 The offer

PACCAR Scout Camp is a superb site for school groups to use as a residential adventure away from the normal school routine. Children can experience an assortment of activities that will increase their enjoyment and appreciation of the outdoors as well as a wide range of life-skills.

The site provides indoor accommodation to cater for a variety of guests with differing capabilities – it offers young people the opportunity to communicate and form close ties.
By taking part in fun yet challenging activities, they will grow their skills, bond, and develop their self-esteem through the benefits of teamwork. Our activities are all run by our Activity Crew members who hold the relevant qualifications for each activity.

As well as the diverse environmental characteristics within the site (including woodlands, meadows and open space, the site provides an excellent camping ground as well as self-catering and full board accommodation for schools in cabins or halls.

Tipis and camping which require greater privacy / security measures for safeguarding of young people are also part of the accommodation choices. There are also detailed risk assessments conducted and shared for all activities undertaken.

The site offers a variety of buildings offering accommodation and space to be used for badge work, games or training facilities. In total there is 44 acres of woodland and two large fields (one of 6 acres and one of 10 acres), please see site map below:
2.3 Footpath usage

In terms of site safety it is worth highlighting that there is currently a footpath which traverses the site. This path currently has very low levels of use, mostly by dogwalkers, at times while the site has a lower intensity of use.

From recent onsite field surveys the average number of individuals on the path ranged from 2.2 to 2.5 persons per hour in each direction. These surveys were carried out in October 2018.

This is a very low level which is at a satisfactory level for appropriate site supervision.

Nearly 40% of these users (37.6%) are between 9 and 10am and a further 16.7% between 10 and 11 am. This signifies more than 50% of users are before 11 am.

The risk with a new local housing development is that the level of use will rise significantly and will extend beyond a very low infrequent use to pose a real threat to privacy and security which then fails to meet acceptable standards for the site in terms of safeguarding. The usage of the footpath is currently very low and has no real impact on the day to day operational activities. It is likely with the introduction of nearby residential housing that footpath usage would increase substantially including during daytime hours. The onsite management team does not have the capacity to control and manage the level of additional throughput of adults and children walking freely across the site which would create certain risks particularly in relation to safeguarding and possible anti-social behaviour.

2.4 Critical success factors at PACCAR Scout Camp

We set out below the critical successful factors of PACCAR as a sustainable business:
Long established with extremely high customer satisfaction and approval rating

Very attractive rural location with a strong sense of getting away from it all for urban based young people

Safe and secure site with vigilant staff and security in place

PACCAR’s clear objectives to develop life-skills in young people from all backgrounds

Track record of building strong relationships with scout groups and generating very high levels of repeat usage, in many cases over more than a decade

Continued acknowledgement that customer expectations and standards are ever-increasing (along with the range of competing experiences) which highlights the need for regular re-investment into new and upgraded facilities

2.5 Strategic role

PACCAR provides an attractive greenspace and also provides linkages to the surrounding countryside.

There is a strong evidence base, which reaches a consensus that access to the outdoors and nature contributes to enhanced wellbeing, mental development and personal fulfilment. Natural, green environments are places to relax, escape and unwind from the daily stresses of modern life; places to socialise and be physically active, thus having a positive effect on our wellbeing. There is also emerging evidence of the benefits of engagement with the natural environment for those living with dementia.

A recent Fields in Trust study attempted to place a value on the greenspace to each user (Fields in Trust, Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces, 2018\(^1\)). The Total Economic Value to an individual is £30.24 per year (£2.52 per month), and includes benefits gained from using their outdoor green space. The ‘Wellbeing Value’ associated with the frequent use of local parks and green spaces is worth £34.2 billion per year to the entire UK adult population.

A new report from the Children's Commissioner for England (Children’s Commissioner Playing Out Report) has made a strong case for increased government support for outdoor play and activities emphasising the social, emotional and physical benefits of playing out for children. The authors note that, as well as losing out on the many important social and

emotional benefits of playing out, “Today’s children are the least active generation ever”.

Research specific to the scouting sector has also provided backing that scouts-based activities make a positive contribution to quality of life and children’s life prospects.

In the 2017 research among 2,000 young people, the findings confirmed that Scouting develops strong community engagement, fostering a culture of curiosity and contributing to greater social cohesion.  

2.6 Safeguarding

The Head of Safeguarding for the Scouting in the County confirms that with nearby housing, security related costs will rise and there will be unacceptably high risks for the site in terms of safeguarding. There are the following issues on safeguarding:

1. There are large areas of wooded areas along the site borders that could be used as cover by those intending harm.

2. The environment is so remote that PACCAR is able to allow children as young as six to run free in the woods (without any need for a fenced contained site boundary).

3. The visiting children sleep in tents that cannot be secured like buildings

Being remote, the current risk for PACCAR is at an acceptable level. With an adjacent or nearby housing development, it would become an unacceptable level of risk which would have a significant effect of visitor usage levels and financial viability.

Boundary security could be enhanced, however, this will be costly and would impact negatively on the aesthetics and open nature of the site which is an important element of its appeal.

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2 World Organization of the Scout Movement, Measuring Scouting Impact on the Development of Young People, March 2018
3 Changing Lives, Strengthening Communities, 2017 report commissioned by Scout Association
4 A fence and /or buffer zone of some 20 metres would not adequately address this issue and would still lead to a major adverse impact on usage and viability
3.0 User research

As part of our work to assess the profile and characteristics of the PACCAR Scout Camp we have carried out a substantial programme of primary research among Group Leaders who have previously attended PACCAR and also among parents whose children have recently attended and benefitted from an organised trip to the site.

Both research programmes demonstrate an exceptionally high regard for the value and benefits of the overall experience and there is a high degree of loyalty and repeat use.

3.1 Group leaders

A survey questionnaire for self-completion was sent to leaders who have previously visited PACCAR with their group. The survey generated a high number of responses with an overall total of 178 group leader responses.

PACCAR enjoys very high ratio of repeat visits as more than 98% had visited on at least two occasions and just below 80% had visited more than 10 times (see Table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of times group visited Paccar</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only once</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 or 3 times</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 times</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10 times</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 times</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many group leaders have remained as repeat users over a long period. Some 64% first came more than 10 years ago and more than 40% more than 20 years ago demonstrating the long-term support which the site enjoys among its users.
The main user groups originate principally from urban and inner-city areas within an hour of the site and more than 50% are based within 30 minutes or less from the site and 90% based within an hour (please see Table below). This reflects in part the key role of PACCAR in providing opportunities for fun and engaging outdoor recreation experiences and activities in a countryside setting for many children who do not have access and do not have regular opportunities to access natural and semi-natural greenspaces in a safe way.

Most of the visits are short breaks which incorporate 2 or 3 nights away from home as shown in the table below. This is part of building life skills and giving children and youths opportunities to gain independence and confidence.
The average group size is just below 30 young people which again demonstrates the popularity of group visits to the PACCAR site.

There are multiple lead reasons for visiting PACCAR. Overall the two main reasons (as shown in the Table above) are for contact with the natural environment (deemed as very important by more than 90%) and for the knowledge that the PACCAR site offers a secure location for young guests with a strong safeguarding ethos and protocol (considered as very important by more than 97% of respondents). It is this protocol that faces a significant
threat from new adjacent housing. The housing development if taken forward will impact adversely on the current offer / site characteristics. If the feeling of ‘getting away from it all’ is lost or damaged then many groups may decide to no longer come.

A selection of additional comments highlighting the enduring appeal of PACCAR are set out below:

- “The entire set-up helps to shape the experiences and lives of many young children. The value of the camp and the impact it has cannot be overstated”
- “It is the first open countryside within hiking distance of London”
- “Being away from a built up London Borough and able to experience and appreciate the more remote Countryside, wildlife and walks”
- “A wild experience away from urbanisation”
- “City children from deprived backgrounds need to experience a safe and peaceful break in a rural environment”
- “We bring Scouts from tough areas and backgrounds to the site and it has a very calming affect on all off them”

Respondents were asked to give a rating score for the impact PACCAR has on delivering programmes to young people. With scores from 0-10 where 10 is high, the average was in excess of 9.5 (9.56). More than 70% (72.3%) give it a maximum score of ten which is an extremely high measure of user satisfaction and demonstrates the very high positive benefits attributed to stays at PACCAR.

The level of awareness relating to the potential nearby residential development is high at just below 90% of respondents.

This reflects the level of interest and ongoing engagement that the PACCAR operation has engendered among its users.

The way the proposed development would affect people’s visiting behaviour in terms of the volume of visiting groups and the regularity of visits is shown below.
The impact during the period of construction, is perceived to be a major negative impact with approximately a third (32.6%) stating that they would not attend during this period and more than 45% (46.6%) stating they would visit less often. A further 17% were unsure and less than just 4% would continue to visit as often as before. This level of reduction in return visitors would have a serious negative impact on trading and the ability to maintain operations.

For those who stated they would come less the level of reduction in visits is high with some 36% stating that they would reduce visits by more than 75% and a further 22% by more than a half. Taking an average this equates to an approximate reduction in visits of 58% which represents a sharp reduction in trading income.
Post construction, the adverse impact of the housing development remains at a high level. Similar to the impact during the period of construction, it perceived to be a major negative impact with just under 30% (26.4%) stating that they would stop coming altogether and more than half (46.6%) stating they would visit less often. A further 16% remain unsure and less than just 6% would continue to visit as often as before. This level of reduction in visitors on an ongoing basis would have a marked impact on trading and this would seriously threaten long term viability of PACCAR.
For those who stated they would come less the level of reduction in visits is high with some 36% stating that they would reduce visits by more than 75% and a further 22% by more than a half. Taking an average this equates to an even higher level of reduction than during construction at c.59% which will lead to a sharp reduction in trading income.

Other comments from group leaders:

- “PACCAR provides excellent space and facilities for children to be able to explore, create, learn and develop safely without the worries of general public interrupting, abusing or misusing the site & facilities. PACCAR allows activities to happen which normally children are unable to access. The chance to take part in these activities is life changing and character building for all children involved. The fact the site is based where it is and is not near houses allows activities to go ahead safely and without complaints regarding the noise, smoke created during camps etc naturally the children will be noisy as are a number of the activities taking part at PACCAR.”

- “Remote location gets young people away from their normal environment providing a new educational experience for them.”

- “We bring Scouts from tough areas and backgrounds to the site and it has a very calming affect on all off them.”
• “A contained and protected site which is not overlooked and we'll isolated for use by children of young ages. Not near a built-up area.”

3.2 Parents

A survey questionnaire for self-completion was completed by a sample of parents whose children have visited PACCAR as part of a group. The survey generated a high completion rate with an overall total of 265 responses.

PACCAR enjoys very high ratio of repeat visits among families with more than 80% visiting on multiple occasions. Almost a quarter of those visiting (24.8%) have sent their children on more than 10 occasions and more than half have been four times or more (see table below).

Clearly the parent survey presents a range of responses which closely align with the group leaders’ feedback. This includes the main origin of visitors with more than 90% based within an hour of the site, serving principally the urban and inner-city areas (please see table below). This highlights the important role of PACCAR in providing opportunities to experience outdoor activities and the natural environment in a safe, accessible and affordable way.
While approximately one in 10 visits among those surveyed are for a day trip, the vast majority involve an overnight stay as part of the package and as a valuable element of the overall experience offered. More than 70% of the visits are short breaks which incorporate 2 or 3 nights away from home as shown in the table below.
Overall the two main reasons given by parents (as shown in the Table above) are for contact with the natural environment and for the knowledge that the PACCAR site offers a secure location for young guests with a strong safeguarding ethos and protocol (both deemed as very important by more than 90%). It is this protocol that faces a significant threat from new adjacent housing.

Among parents the range of facilities is also seen as a priority reason for visiting with more than 90% confirming this to be very important.

Respondents were asked to give a rating score for the impact PACCAR has on delivering programmes to their offspring and young people in general. With scores from 0-10 where 10 is high, the average was approximately 9.5 (9.49). More than 70% (70.83%) gave a score at the maximum of ten which is an extremely high measure of user satisfaction and demonstrates the very high positive benefits attributed by parents to stays at PACCAR.

It was worth noting one of the comments to highlight this benefit by those parents able to see the impact first hand:

“Great impact, it is a highlight of the year, a chance to engage with the landscape and the woods, away from home, boost confidence, and develop independence. One of the few opportunities to do this with his peers ie the Scout group.”
A selection of additional comments highlighting the positive feedback and high regard of PACCAR are set out below:

- “What with living in west London this place is a haven for children to experience nature and wildlife.”

- “Learning about the natural environment of the local area & how to interact with it in a sympathetic way without a detrimental effect on the environment or wildlife.”

- “Experience of staying away from home in a safe group.”

- “Important for my children to experience an outdoor camping activity in a natural, secure and peaceful environment which is so different from the usual home setting in a built up area.”

- “The camp was easy to drive to. The safety measures in place in such a beautiful natural area played a big role in leaving the boys there.”

- “It’s a great place for the kids to get far away from our local area and see something new as well as it is so out of the way so they can get away from urban life.”

- “A safe rural environment is key especially for inner city children who don’t get to spend time outside otherwise.”

- “Engaging environment with safety at its heart”

The level of awareness relating to the potential nearby residential development is lower among parents than group leaders but the level still reaches some 70% of respondents (please see table above). This reflects the level of interest and ongoing engagement that the PACCAR operation has engendered among parents of users as well as leaders.
The impact of the development presents a different perspective than the group leader survey in that a high level of parent respondents are prepared to leave booking decisions to the group leaders (more than 40%). Clearly as shown in the section above a high proportion of group leaders would reduce or cease to visit PACCAR if the housing development proceeds. There is still a significant proportion of parents who would change their usage behaviour insofar as a quarter would stop their child from visiting during the construction period and just over one in four would send their child less often (26.5%).
The pattern is broadly similar post construction with almost a half (49.3%) stating that they would either stop their child from visiting (20.5%) or would visit less often (28.8%).

Other comments from parents:

- “PACCAR is a haven for these children, they feel like it’s the countryside. Building beside it would ruin the look and feel of the wilderness, absolutely awful idea.”

- “Scouting can be noisy but is fantastic fun when done in a wide space. Housing next door to a scout camp will effect how leaders and the venue run activities this will reduce the campsites attraction to scout groups.”

- “The development so close to a camp site will effect the security of my child, the site will not feel like a camp site "in the middle of nowhere" as it does now. Residence will not like the noise and campfires and I bet will end up with PACCAR having to restrict what they can offer.”

- “This would have a huge detrimental effect on the Scout Camp in regards to safe guarding issues and we would have to seriously consider whether it was a safe environment for my child to stay at.”

- “Safeguarding issues (boundary fences; increased traffic risk; negative impact on natural surroundings and wildlife.”

- “It is a great environment for children to explore and learn in a quiet and safe eating. This will all change with the proposed development.”

- “I would trust the Scout leaders to make a good decision about whether it was still a good site to go to. I think it’s likely that if a major housing project takes place the scout leaders will be forced to choose another site for their activities. Living in central London it is fantastic to have somewhere like PACCAR that is easily accessible but still fairly remote and natural.”

- “Yet another loss for our natural environment. Children who live in the city are most impacted by such a development. PACCAR is a wonderful site offering many children an unequalled opportunity to be outside and independent, to benefit from the fresh air and their natural surroundings.”
• “Security of my children is paramount and could be at risk with increased persons in or near the area.”

• “I would be concerned about the survival of the camp, the environment will change, the security within the area.”
4.0 Case Examples

4.1 The Belchamps Scout Activity Centre, Essex
When Belchamps was created, it was sited amid farms and Market gardens, at least a mile from the local village. Over the years, the local village has grown so the site now has housing estates on two sides. The Chair of trustees at Belchamps Scout Activity Centre has warned of the issues experienced that in his opinion are likely to occur at PACCAR Scout Camp.

The impact of nearby housing
The proximity of the siting of houses near to a Scout Activity causes issues for the residents (and complaints to the local council). The main issues relate to noise disturbance and traffic issues particularly around large events run at the site.

From the Activity Centre’s perspective, houses being located so near causes issues, including problems around local youths trespassing on the site and vandalism of boundary fencing and buildings.

It is worth noting that very few house sales go ahead during the summer next to a scout camp. Owners and agents tend to wait until the winter/early Spring, when it is (for the most part) a peaceful field with low noise levels.

There are also safeguarding issues from people being able to potentially watch and film young people doing activities whilst at camp.

Developments and improvements on the camp are restricted because some of the neighbours make unfounded planning objections.

As a result of these combined issues stated above, the Scout Camp has taken the decision that it could no longer continue and has started negotiations with local developers and the local authority about them granting permission for housing on the site.

4.2 The Jubilee Wood Scout Campsite and Youth Activity Centre
This case example follows the example of Jubilee Wood Scout Campsite and Activity Centre in Wiltshire which has witnessed nearby residential development and experienced a range of associated issues.

Introduction
The Jubilee Wood Scout Campsite and Youth Activity Centre was purchased in 2012 in open countryside to the south east of Trowbridge, Wiltshire. The site was chosen for its superb
location in open countryside, within reasonable distance all of its main catchment population and young members and far enough away from housing to avoid any noise which might be made and causing a nuisance, for example during night games.

Enjoying nature and ‘getting away from it all’
Being in reasonably remote countryside also presents a challenge to young people camping overnight, many of whom will see the night sky for the first time.

The site borders Biss Wood, an area of ancient woodland, now being managed as a wildlife reserve by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT). The Scouts made a number of agreements with WWT under which the Scouts would carry out various conservation tasks in Biss Wood and assist in its maintenance. In return, the scouts would have the use of part of the wood for activities such as outdoor games, building shelters and camping overnight.

As WWT open their reserves to the public and the Scouts have very real concerns with regard to safeguarding, WWT instituted a number of measures designed to make access to the public difficult and to keep the public away from areas used by the Scouts and away from the Camp Site.

The impact of nearby housing
The measures with WWT worked extremely well for a time, but the construction of new homes to the north of our site has brought with it very much increased visitor pressure. The problems now experienced on a regular basis include:

- Dogs messing in the woods, with their owners either neglecting to clear it up or, if they do, discarding poo bags around the entrances, bringing with it the danger that deer and other wildlife will eat it as well as threatening the health of our young members

- Interference with /interruption of deer management. Our stalkers find that their warning signs are thrown away or ignored and runners routinely put themselves and their unleashed dogs in the line of fire. Attempts to shut off access by locking stiles etc have met with active and abusive behaviour

- Very much increased foot traffic and trespass, turning woodland rides into quagmires and leaving litter

- Very much increased penetration into the woodland off the rides, sometimes creating paths, trampling bluebells and other wildflowers and disturbing the
wildlife, some of which are protected species and into the areas designated for Scout Use

- People letting dogs off the leash to run wild in the woods disturbing wildlife, for example, hibernating woodmice.
- Motor bikers using the rides as a race track
- Cyclists cutting up the rides and cutting new paths through the woods
- People using the wood for parties, lighting fires which are left unattended and leaving bottles and cans
- People using the wood and our car park for sexual activities – sometimes in broad daylight
- People disregarding the restrictions on access
- Stealing firewood
- Trespassers using Scout facilities, such as the obstacle course, causing damage
- Vandalism, including damage to fences, signs and bird boxes and uprooting newly planted trees

Enforcement
Unfortunately it is reported that when challenged, some visitors completely ignore requests to adhere to the “rules” and it is not unknown for some to become very abusive and threatening. This brings with it real dangers as regards safeguarding for the young scout members.

There have also been two burglaries where it seems very likely that the perpetrators accessed the site from the direction of the new housing development.

There are some remedial measures that can be taken, such as bigger and better fences, planting hedges and screening trees but the site aims to teach its young members to respect the natural environment and to appreciate its beauty and this cannot be carried out inside a fortress.
4.3 Implications for PACCAR

The experience of this the Scout sites in Wiltshire and Essex demonstrate clearly the risks posed by the construction of housing close to a residential activity site. The range of problems range from elements of anti-social behaviour through to criminal activity. The key point is that the risk of young people is too great for safeguarding procedures and as a consequence visitor levels will drop off.
5.0 Financial impact assessment

PACCAR is an autonomous self-financing centre which has managed to maintain a very well controlled trading operation over its long-established history.

It has been serving the scouting and young people for decades and has maintained a positive trading position and ongoing capital programme of refreshment over a very long sustained period as well as continuing to invest capital into the new facilities and features / structures. There is also a significant requirement to ensure that all existing and new buildings are fully accessible and DDA compliant which has significant financial implications.

Since 2007 when the PACCAR name was adopted, the site has experienced an impressive rate of growth and now serves tens of thousands of young people from across the West London, Buckinghamshire and further afield.

5.1 Recent investment

Since 2007 the site has benefitted from the addition of:

- new bunkhouse facilities
- accommodation unit for staff / leaders,
- activity tower
- archery and rifle ranges
- zip wires and tomahawk throwing activities.

Our research among leaders and parents has further confirmed how important the range and quality of facilities is in terms of the reasons for choosing PACCAR. Clearly any downward pressure on trading income will have an adverse impact on the ability to reinvest into capital projects.

5.2 Trading profile

In terms of the main income centres the vast majority of income comes from scouting activities. Between 85-90% of overall revenue is derived from camp fees and activities.

The level of repeat visitors is extremely high. Less than 2% of those respondents to the survey were on their first visit.
The centre has continued to show positive growth in terms of annual income rising by more than 50% (56.9%) between the financial years for 2015 to 2018.

The structure of the trading operation shows a relatively high level of fixed costs as can be seen in the Table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Overheads</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Overheads as a percentage of income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>343,430.0</td>
<td>362,529.0</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>336,604.0</td>
<td>410,616.5</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>533,427.0</td>
<td>567,142.1</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>480,660.0</td>
<td>568,557.9</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the construction phase more than 77% of scout leaders would reduce their use of the site and more than 73% during the operational phase. This includes more than 30 and 26% who would stop coming altogether in the construction and post construction phases (respectively). It is interesting to note that the average surplus before re-investment over the last four years equates to 11.2% of annual income. The research highlights that this surplus would be completely eroded by a significant reduction in usage of the site. The reduction in income will lead to a significant deficit which would severely impact on the viability of the whole operation.

PACCAR is highly vulnerable to any reduction in income – any future drop in income would also have a disproportionate effect on the money available for reinvestment and the ongoing improvement programme and cause great uncertainty over future capital projects.

5.3 Impact of development on financial sustainability
The research among leaders informs us that the proposed housing will lead to a severe reduction in the level of visits taken by group leaders and parents. This will be significant both in terms of the construction period which for many will make the site unappealing and post construction when the proximity to a high-density residential development will adversely affect the ‘get away from it all’ feel of the site.
During construction, 32.6% of leaders will stop visiting altogether. A further 46.6% will reduce their level of visits by an average rate of 58% which is equivalent to a further 29.5 ceasing to attend.

This means that in total more than 60% of existing visitor throughput will cease to attend. This signifies that with camp fees and activities at 2018 levels of £508,949, the reduction would be a minimum of £316,057. This ignores those who are unsure which would most likely represent a further reduction in visitor levels.

Post construction the 26.4% of leaders will stop visiting altogether. A further 46.6% will reduce their level of visits by an average rate of 59% which is equivalent to a further 29.3 ceasing to attend. Once a centre loses its core market it is very hard to regain.

This means that in total more than 55% (55.7%) of existing visitor throughput will cease to attend. This signifies that with camp fees at 2018 levels of £508,949, the reduction would be a minimum of £283,484. As with the construction period calculation, this ignores those who are unsure which would most likely represent a further reduction in visitor levels.

Given the high fixed cost base this will signify that the whole centre will become a loss-making concern with a trading deficit and no potential funds to allocate to ongoing improvements, refurbishments and new capital programmes. Ultimately this completely changes the whole operation into a non-viable entity which could not support such losses over a sustained period. The reduction in throughput, the decline in trading income risk placing the centre into a downward spiral of decreasing income from which it will be hard to recover.

Customer expectations across the leisure and tourism sector are increasing at a fast rate and this also applies to group accommodation centres in terms of the quality of accommodation and range of facilities and activities available. This signifies that the need to allocate resources into upgrading and expanding the product offer is gaining even more importance over time.

It is worth emphasising that PACCAR represents a value for money experience which aims to provide activity breaks at affordable prices to remain as accessible as possible to groups and communities of all backgrounds. Scouting has a strong reputation for reaching deprived communities and PACCAR has great appeal among less affluent in inner city areas of Greater London. This means there is limited opportunity (or indeed appetite) to increase baseline tariff levels.
6.0 Summary comments

The proposed adjacent housing scheme under Option 8 represents a major threat to the continued existence and viability of PACCAR as an activity centre for scouts and other young people.

This Paper supported by detailed primary research among group leaders (who book the residential activity trips) and parents demonstrates how currently PACCAR is an accessible, attractive, established and popular successful residential activity centre delivering a range of programmed activities for young people in the sub-region at affordable rates.

The housing development will impact on the site’s rural character and sense of natural setting in attractive countryside. This in turn will not only impact on the safety and security of the site to deliver programmes outdoors for young people, it will also jeopardise the future income generated from scout and school groups. The primary research confirms that there is widespread dismay at the proposed residential development plans. Group leaders (and parents) have clearly indicated that the development will significantly reduce their use of the centre (during both the development and post-development phases). This reduction in usage will have a major adverse impact on the future financial viability of PACCAR.

The case examples also demonstrate the negative impacts which housing development has had on other comparable sites leading to closure in one case.

If the housing development is approved, the conclusion is that it will cause the end of a valuable service to young people which has been benefitting large numbers of young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, for more than 50 years.

Given the high fixed cost base this will signify that the whole centre will become a loss-making concern with a trading deficit and no potential funds to allocate to ongoing improvements, refurbishments and new capital programmes. Ultimately this completely changes the whole operation into a non-viable entity which could not support such losses over a sustained period.

The resulting conclusion is that if the land under Option 8 were to be released from the Green Belt and the housing development is taken forward, it will lead to the closure of PACCAR Scout Camp.