

March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## **More young people to get chance to explore the great outdoors as South Cerney looks to exciting future**

**Gloucestershire County Council's Cabinet today gave the go ahead to exciting new plans for South Cerney Outdoor Education Centre.**

Young people from all over Gloucestershire and beyond will benefit from the proposed sale of the South Cerney site to Prospects Services Ltd.

As well as having a proven track record in delivering activities, education and training for young people, Prospects will initially invest an extra £500,000 into the site. It will improve the facilities and accommodation and offer a wider range of outdoor pursuits.

It will also create a Prospects Green Centre to promote environmental learning and interest in the countryside and rural crafts among pupils.

Its vision is for more young people to benefit from using the facility, alongside existing users, including students from Prospects Academies and on training schemes throughout the county and beyond.

Prospects will look to meet with groups that currently use the site as soon as possible to discuss how it can work with them in future to build a sustainable business that will benefit young people and the local community.

The sale will also secure the future of the current centre staff, who will be able to transfer across to the new business.

Cllr Will Windsor-Clive, Cabinet Member for Communities, said: "These plans for the South Cerney site are really positive news for young people in Gloucestershire. Prospects have an impressive track record in delivering activities for young people and in training and developing them.

"It has exciting plans to improve the site and increase opportunities for young people from all over Gloucestershire, including offering a wider range of outdoor activities.

"Of course, we could have got more money for the site, had we not attached conditions to the sale – like preventing housing development and stipulating that it must continue to provide outdoor education.

“However, we know how valued this facility is and were keen to find a buyer who would improve the site to benefit young people, and work closely with current users and the local community to make the business a success.

“We will now look to transfer the business as soon as possible and will support Prospects to develop and promote a summer programme of activities. Staff transferring as part of the sale will be key to the success of this exciting new venture.”

Ray Auvray, Executive Chairman of Prospects, said: “We are delighted that Gloucestershire County Council has approved moving forward with the deal with Prospects to secure the future of the South Cerney Outdoor Education Centre.

“Prospects plans significant investment to create a better and more widely used facility for the young people of Gloucestershire and beyond. The project builds on our existing partnership with the county council, who we have worked with for a number of years providing services for young people.

“In addition to the outdoor education activities, the company is also planning to create the first Prospects Green Centre - an environmental study centre - on the site, so that young people can gain a better understanding of ecology, the environment and the countryside.”

Prospects will take on a 125-year lease of the South Cerney site.

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to editors:**

A 10-day cooling off period follows the announcement of the preferred bidder.

The proposed sale would see South Cerney Outdoor Education Centre staff transfer to a Limited Company with no share capital – meaning staff have an ability to have an interest in the company through shares, similar to that of John Lewis.

Prospects Services Ltd is a leading supplier of education, employment and training services. Its expertise includes careers advice for young people and adults, helping people find employment through the Work Programme, supporting schools and colleges, inspection services, independent education, event management, educational resources and recruitment.

The Audit Commission has highlighted the work of Prospects in Gloucestershire as a case study of best practice.

Prospects and Gloucestershire County Council already have a strong track record of working in partnership, including delivering the targeted Youth Support Service together. This provides support and activities to vulnerable

young people throughout the county, including young people not in education, employment and training and those with disabilities and in care.

Prospects also provides a successful careers information, advice and guidance service on behalf of the county council.

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