

# Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

To: Corporate Policy and Resources Committee

**ANNUAL LAND LETTINGS**

**17<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

**For Decision**

<b>Linkage to Corporate Plan</b>	
<b>Strategic Priority</b>	Protecting and enhancing our Environments and Assets
<b>Objective</b>	Maximise return from Council Assets
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Moira Quinn
<b>Cost: (If applicable)</b>	

## **1.0 Background**

1.1 Council currently own and “let” various plots of agricultural land throughout the Borough. Historically these “land lettings” would have been advertised around this time to allow for Winter Grazing, and licenses issue to those successful for a period of between one and three years.

The following areas of land were previously included under the Annual Land Lettings:-

- a) Letterloan Disused Landfill Site, Macosquin
- b) Blackrock Road, Kilrea
- c) Craigahulliar, Portrush
- d) Bayhead Road, Portballintrae
- e) Laurel Hill, Coleraine
- f) Camus Picnic Area, Coleraine
- g) Burn Brae, Lisnaginagh, Bushmills

1.2 This year, a number of areas have been suggested for Conservation Grazing, namely

- a) Waterfoot – 2ha/4.94 acres
- b) Benone – 9.0 ha/22.24 acres (to be let as one lot)
- c) Magilligan Point – 2ha/4.94 acres
- d) Whiterocks – 1.8ha/4.45 acres

The “Conservation Grazing” is being developed at a number of sites by the Biodiversity Officer which will help towards the Council meeting its Biodiversity Duty, where Conservation Grazing is the use of grazing animals to help improve the biodiversity of a site. There will be specific terms and conditions with regard to type and number of animals and length of grazing season.

The Biodiversity Officer in conjunction with the Procurement Officer, and with advice from NIEA have developed specific criteria for conservation grazing which will allow the site to be grazed for conservation purposes, protect the Councils land and clearly sets out what is expected of the grazier. These criteria will be used to fairly assess, score award the quotation received to graze these areas.

There are a few considerations with respect to both Benone and Magilligan Point. Both sites are within Magilligan ASSI/SAC and will be subject to certain restrictions with respect to stocking density, and duration of grazing.

## **2.0 Procedure/Process**

The process in terms of letting land differed in the legacy councils. In one Council, this was undertaken by a local estate agent, in terms of advertising, dealing with queries, receiving the bids, and allocating to the highest bidder. Other legacy Councils administered the process in house.

These lettings could be administered in house, by advertising in local press and Council website, with sealed bids submitted by an agreed closing date.

## **3.0 Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommend to the Council

- a) Approval to proceed with the Annual Land Lettings for a period of one year, subject to review and extension of a further year
- b) Approval to proceed with “Conservation Grazing” with agreed terms and conditions associated with license advised by Biodiversity officer, and relevant land managers.
- c) Agree on a process regarding advertising and receiving bids