



CABINET – 31ST JULY 2012

SUBJECT: FORMER BRICKWORKS SITE, DANYGRAIG, RISCA

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider the future use of the former brickworks site, shown hatched on the plan.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

2.1 To contribute fully towards improvements in the health, safety and wellbeing of all sections of the community.

2.2 To promote the learning, self - esteem and performance of our children, young people and adults by enhancing skills and understanding and the creation of a lifelong learning community.

3. THE REPORT

3.1 BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 4th May 2010 Cabinet resolved that the land shown on the plan be leased to Mrs. Blunt for the Lylac Ridge project, the details of which are set out in the earlier report; officers were to report back to Cabinet with alternative options if the application were not progressed satisfactorily.

3.2 CURRENT SITUATION

3.2.1 Since that decision, Mrs. Blunt has secured piecemeal funding towards fencing works, acquisition of animal shelters, acquisition of cleaning and health and safety equipment, production of publicity material together with funding to recruit a workshop manager and assistance towards the submission of a planning application. Various other funding applications have been made and are yet to be determined

3.2.2 A number of workshops and awareness sessions have been arranged and are proposed for local schools, businesses and the general community.

3.2.3 In order to develop the site as originally proposed, planning permission will be required and as part of this process Mrs. Blunt will need to arrange site investigations and risk assessments to identify the extent of any contamination and to assess whether gas emissions are present. Members will recall that these matters were identified in the earlier report; discussions have taken place with Planning Officers, but an application has not been submitted. Similarly funding has not been secured for these surveys, although applications are being pursued. The project is unlikely to be commercially viable and likely to remain subject to funding instability.

- 3.2.4 Due to the costs and the uncertainty of securing funding for the surveys, Mrs. Blunt has expressed an interest in leasing the land on an annual tenancy for grazing purposes to graze existing animals in their ownership, to give momentum to the project, which may assist with the funding applications. If the land is used solely for grazing, then Planning Permission will not be required. The Lylac Ridge project is not currently open to the public and therefore additional traffic should not be attracted to this location from this potential grazing use.

3.3 DISPOSAL OPTIONS

- 3.3.1 Members will be aware from the previous report, that adjoining owners were also interested in leasing the land for grazing purposes and the following disposal options still exist (although Mr. Williams' ongoing interest noted has not been confirmed: paragraph 3.3.3 refers):-
- 3.3.2 To advertise the grazing rights. There may be suitable interest, although recent grazing advertisements have had limited success.
- 3.3.3 To let the land to Mr Williams of Buck Farm on a Farm Business Tenancy. Mr. Williams and Mr. Munn before him have used the land sensitively. In the absence of Mrs. Blunt's application, officers would still be minded to recommend this option.
- 3.3.4 To confirm the support for the Lylac Ridge project and grant an annual farm business tenancy to Mrs. Blunt at a nominal fee. If this option were pursued, officers would recommend that the circumstances be reviewed after 3 years.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Inviting tenders for grazing rights on the land will probably produce the most income but will involve expensive advertising costs and ongoing management issues associated with re-letting the grazing rights every 3 years (in line with the grazing policy).
- 4.2 Letting the land to Mr. Williams on a Farm Business Tenancy would possibly result in a lower income but would avoid the need to incur advertising costs and result in reduced management costs (in line with the grazing policy, Farm Business Tenancies are re-let to the existing tenants on expiry).
- 4.3 A tenancy to Mrs Blunt would be for a nominal fee.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no potential equalities implications to the recommendations in this report on groups or individuals who fall under the categories identified in Section 6 of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan. There is no requirement for an Equalities Impact Assessment Questionnaire to be completed for this report however an impact assessment may be required for any future development on the site as part of that project.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are none.

7. CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 Countryside have confirmed that all suitable grazing land within the vicinity of Ynys Hywel Farm, Cwmfelinfach is utilised as part of the farm and there is no scope to accommodate

Lylac Ridge at this farm. Local Councillors initially had concerns that the proposal may increase traffic to this location, but with clarification of the proposal these concerns have been satisfied. There are no other views expressed that have not been incorporated into this report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet confirm the support for the Lylac Ridge project and grant an annual farm business tenancy to Mrs. Blunt at a nominal fee on terms to be negotiated.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 A tenancy of the site for the Lylac Ridge project has potential benefits for schools and disadvantaged individuals throughout the borough, who may wish to take advantage of the opportunities it may offer.

10. STATUTORY POWER

- 10.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000; Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent (Wales) 2003. This is a Cabinet function.

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