

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 5TH JULY 2011

Title:

LEASING PART OF THE LAMMAS LANDS

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Roger Steel]
[Godalming Charterhouse, Godalming Farncombe & Catteshall]**

Summary and purpose:

To seek authority for Waverley to take a 10 year lease of 2.73 hectares of the Lammas Lands shown hatched on the plan at Annexe 1, owned by the Henry Smith Charity and Loseley Park Estate, to tie in with the Council's application for a 10 year environmental grant scheme (Higher Level Stewardship).

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The environmental grant scheme (HLS) delivers the corporate priority for Environment and Value for Money.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no equality and diversity implications.

Climate Change Implications:

The management of this functioning flood meadow is important in coping with extreme wet weather periods in this area of Godalming.

Resource/Value for Money Implications:

The cost of the two leases will be minimal and estimated at £20/annum. The grant income receivable by entering into these leases will assist in the annual management costs of this important wildlife habitat and historic landscape.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications.

Background

1. The Lammas Lands are an important site for its cultural, landscape and wildlife value. It is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), an Area of Strategic Visual Importance and an Area of High Archaeological Potential, as well as being highly valued by the people of Godalming.

2. The Countryside section manages 31.8 hectares of common land across three fields (Overgone, Catteshall and Almshouse Meadows) alongside the River Wey. 2.73 hectares of this land is owned by other parties. The long-term management objectives are to improve the biodiversity value of site and maintain public access. This has been achieved since 2001 through managing the site under a 10 year Countryside Stewardship Scheme, which has now expired.

Introduction

3. Within Overgone Meadow there are two areas of land that are owned by other parties: 0.23 hectares owned by Henry Smith Charity and 2.5 hectares owned by Loseley Park Estate, shown hatched on the plan at Annexe 1. Both of these areas are unfenced and are not physically separated from the Council's land ownership. Because this is common land the different land ownership parcels cannot easily be separated from the larger field and therefore for effective management (eg grazing) they need to be managed as one unit.
4. The Council has the opportunity to enter the land into a new environmental management scheme called Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) which will provide grant aid towards managing this important wet meadow habitat, including essential capital works. In order to obtain this grant aid, Waverley will need to be able to demonstrate that it has legal control over the whole land affected by the Scheme. Leases of those areas not owned by Waverley will therefore be required for the duration of the grant.

Conclusion

5. Under the HLS scheme the Council needs to sign an agreement to deliver certain objectives and therefore we need a legal agreement with the third parties. This can be most easily achieved through 10 year leases, which equate to the length of the HLS scheme. The Council will retain all the grant income and use it for the management of Lammas Lands.

Recommendation

To authorise the Deputy Chief Executive to negotiate 10 year leases with the Henry Smith Charity and Loseley Park Estate.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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