

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Beechvale Farm – Letting of part to the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute
Date:	5 March 2010
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects Department, Ext. 6217
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager, Ext. 3493

Relevant Background Information

At its meeting on 11 February 2010 the Parks and Leisure Committee agreed to renew the letting agreement with the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute by way of a 5 year lease commencing on 1 December 2009. The rent under the new lease has been agreed at £8,000 pa and the lease will contain provisions which allow the Council to terminate the lease on six months notice.

The 45.81 acre site had been let to DARD (role now with AFBI) by way of conacre agreements since February 1994. The current rent is £7,869 pa. These agreements typically cover a period of 11 months and require the tenant to remove crops from the land outside this period. It is however felt that these agreements are not ideally suitable for AFBI purposes.

The extent of the premises to be leased is shown outlined in red on the map attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Key Issues

- Site area, rent, length of lease and proposed use have been agreed with the tenant, subject to Committee approval.

Resource Implications

Financial

- A yearly rent of £8000 from 1 December 2009 would become payable on completion of the new lease between the Council and the AFBI.

- The AFBI will continue to be responsible for maintaining all existing hedges, ditches, fencing, gates etc.

Human Resources

- Legal Services and Estates Management resources required during lease finalisation.

Asset and Other Implications

- While retaining rental income the Council's medium term interests are protected by reserving the right to terminate this agreement at any time subject to giving six months written notice.

Recommendations

In accordance with Council Standing Orders, Committee is recommended to agree to renew the expired conacre agreement with a new lease between the Council and the AFBI from 1 December 2009 for a 5 year term at a rent of £8000 pa, subject to detailed terms being included in an appropriate legal agreement (to be drafted by the Director of Legal Services).

Decision Tracking

The Director of the Department of Property and Projects to ensure that the letting renewal is implemented by the end of April 2010.

Key to Abbreviations

DARD – Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

AFBI – Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute

RPI – Retail Prices Index all items

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Map showing (outlined red) lands to be included in the proposed letting renewal.