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## **EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 29 OCTOBER 2012**

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**EX.122/12    \*\*HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP GRANT**  
(Key Decision – KD.035/12)

**Portfolio**      Environment and Transport

**Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel**      Environment and Economy

### **Subject Matter**

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder reported (LE.30/12) that, as a major landowner in the Carlisle area, the City Council qualified for agri-environmental grants in the same way as private farmers.

In the past the grants awarded to the Council included Countryside Stewardship (for agricultural land) and Woodland Grant Scheme (for woodlands). Those agreements were typically for a 10 year period and previous recipient sites included Talkin Tarn. With an annual payment of £22,800 the total for the 10 years of the agreement was £228,000 for both revenue and capital items.

Having come to the end of an Entry Level Scheme for Countryside Stewardship, the Council now qualified for the Higher Level Scheme (HLS) under which the potential payments were increased. Officers had been working for some months, with assistance from Natural England's advisers, to enter as much of the City Council's land as possible into the scheme in order to maximise the value of the grant.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder drew Members' attention to the complete list of sites for which HLS had been offered. She further outlined the purpose and conditions of the grant; and the levels of payment. The options open to the Council were:

- a.      Do not accept the grant;
- b.      Accept the grant in part; or
- c.      Accept the grant in whole

The Portfolio Holder alluded to the lively debate at the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 25 October 2012 (EEOSP.65/12), when the Panel had resolved:

“1) That Report LE.36/12 on the Higher Level of Stewardship grant offer be noted.

2) That the Panel was supportive of acceptance of the grant in part (Option B) and the views of the Panel be conveyed to the Executive.”

Copies of an Excerpt from the draft Minutes of the meeting had been circulated.

In conclusion, the Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder moved the recommendations, which were duly seconded by the Leader.

**Summary of options rejected** Options a. and b. set out in Report LE.30/12

## **DECISION**

1. That the Executive recommended acceptance of the Higher Level Scheme grant to full Council in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy procedure, and accepted the conditions of grant in full.
2. That the Executive delegated the Director of Local Environment to sign the agreement on behalf of Carlisle City Council.

## **Reasons for Decision**

To enable the Council's Green Spaces Team to improve the management and maintenance of the sites listed within the report.