

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 20 May 2021

Lauriston Farm, Edinburgh – Proposed Lease

Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	Ward 1 - Almond
Council Commitments	2.44

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Committee approves a 25-year lease of the land at Lauriston Farm to Edinburgh Agroecology Co-op CIC on the terms outlined in this report and on other terms and conditions to be agreed by the Executive Director of Resources.

Stephen S. Moir

Executive Director of Resources

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Lauriston Farm, Edinburgh – Proposed Lease

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council own the land known as Lauriston Farm, near Cramond, which until 2020 was leased for grazing purposes. The Council has received a proposal from Edinburgh Agroecology Co-op CIC for a community farm to be established on the land. This report seeks approval to lease the land to Edinburgh Agroecology Co-op CIC on the terms and conditions outlined in the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 In [March 2018](#), the Housing and Economy Committee agreed the high-level objectives for the regeneration of Granton Waterfront including the intention to work collaboratively with the public-sector partners and the local community to develop a vision for Granton. This included agreement to undertake work to update frameworks and studies to support future development.
- 3.2 Later the same year, the Council purchased the Forthquarter site with other land in Granton Waterfront, owned by in Waterfront Edinburgh Limited (WEL/EDI), also transferred to the Council. A multi-disciplinary team was appointed to prepare a Development Framework and a high-level programme delivery plan for Granton Waterfront.
- 3.3 The Development Framework, which will guide future development within Granton Waterfront, was approved by the Planning Committee on 26 February 2020. This guidance sets out the ambition to transform this former industrial site into a new vibrant, healthy and sustainable city quarter which will, with time, redefine Edinburgh into one of Europe's top Waterfront destinations to live, learn, work and visit.
- 3.4 The Council now owns approximately 120 acres of developable land within the Granton Waterfront area, creating a unique opportunity for the Council to take an infrastructure first approach and work in collaboration with key partners and the community to deliver exemplar regeneration. In addition, there is around 200 Ha of existing open space located on the north shore stretching between Cramond to the west and Gypsy Brae to the east. The area currently contains farmland, a golf course, Lauriston Castle and includes the 3.5km coastline and promenade edge. As part of the regeneration, the Council have set out a vision which will optimise the use of this green space with the aim of creating one of Europe's largest coastal

parks. A strategy and action plan to deliver on this vision will be developed over time in line with key stakeholders and the wider community.

- 3.5 The land currently known as Lauriston Farm, is located towards Cramond and extends to approximately 40.92 hectares (101 acres) as shown outlined in red on the plan attached as Appendix 1. Until 2020 the land was let on annual basis for grazing purposes.
- 3.6 The Council has been approached by Edinburgh Agroecology Co-op CIC (EAC), a community interest company, to take a lease over the land on which to establish an urban farm. The aim is to create an exemplar model of urban agroecology farming, habitat creation and multifunctional land use that benefits, supports and regenerates the environment and those connected to it. At the heart of the approach is the concept of regenerative land management, food production and healthy communities. This proposal aligns with the overall vision of the Framework to create a new vibrant, healthy and sustainable city quarter.

4. Main report

- 4.1 EAC has submitted a business plan to the Council which outlines the vision for the land, including:
- Increasing biodiversity;
 - Use of Agroforestry systems (land use management system in which trees/shrubs are grown amongst crops);
 - Organic food growing – no dig method with zero chemical use;
 - Habitat enhancement;
 - Work towards becoming carbon negative;
 - Job creation; and,
 - Working with communities.
- 4.2 The project will initially focus on creating a market garden, building the project's infrastructure, including its hedgerows, rewilding areas and agroforestry systems; instigating a diverse and soil-building crop rotation on a field scale; setting up the community area and engagement activities and researching the second stage of business opportunities, which may include some of the following: cut-flowers business, herbal medicine garden, seed business and plant nursery.
- 4.3 Adopting the agroecological farming practices, both short and longer term food production will be established, beginning with soft fruit and vegetables and expanding to include top fruit, grains and pulses. The aim is to create a sustainable source of produce to assist with alleviating food poverty.
- 4.4 Community involvement will include the creation of allotments, a community orchard and a community education hub.

4.5 EAC are seeking an initial 25-year lease of the land and the following provisional terms have been agreed:

- Subjects Land at Lauriston Farm;
- Tenant Edinburgh Agroecology Co-op CIC;
- Term 25 years from date of entry;
- Rent: £8,000 per annum;
- Rent Review 10 yearly on an upwards only basis;
- Break Option: The tenant will have the benefit of a break option at any time during the lease on serving not less than 6 months written notice on the Council to this effect; The landlord will be entitled to bring the lease, or part thereof in respect of land to be leased, to an end should the tenant fail to meet the Key Performance Indicators (as agreed by both parties) for 2 successive years;
- Use: The land will be used as a Community Urban Farm and will include, but not be limited to, the following- Crop Growing, Market Garden, Allotments;
- Repair The tenant will accept a full repairing liability for the land and walls/fences which enclose the perimeter (subject to a schedule of condition);
- Conditions
 - i) The tenant obtaining all relevant permissions and licences relevant with the proposed use of the land;
 - ii) The tenant securing funding for at least set up/infrastructure/operational costs for the first two years after the date of entry;
 - iii) Evidence that the tenant will establish a communications and marketing strategy to the satisfaction of the Council;
 - iv) The tenant setting up a committee of individuals with relevant expertise and community representation to the satisfaction of the Council;
 - v) Evidence that the tenant will work to establish research and academic partnerships and community organisation/local school partnerships to the satisfaction of the Council;
 - vi) A commitment on the part of the tenant to provide an annual report to the Council on progress over the preceding 12 months set against the agreed Key Performance Indicators;
 - vii) The tenant agreeing to a right of access to the Council throughout the period of the lease to undertake works in connection with the Open Space development plan, such works not to have an adverse impact on the land being suitable for the permitted use

- 4.6 Through the use of agreed Key Performance Indicators, Lauriston Farm's performance will be reviewed against an agreed baseline. This will ensure that the Council has a mechanism to reduce the overall area of land to be leased to the group should there be a risk that this would remain unutilised.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Subject to Committee approval, the Legal Services will be instructed to progress with the lease documentation, which will be concluded when the conditions have been purified.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 A rent of £8,000 per annum will be payable to the General Fund. This reflects the rental that was previously received from the land when it was used for grazing purposes.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

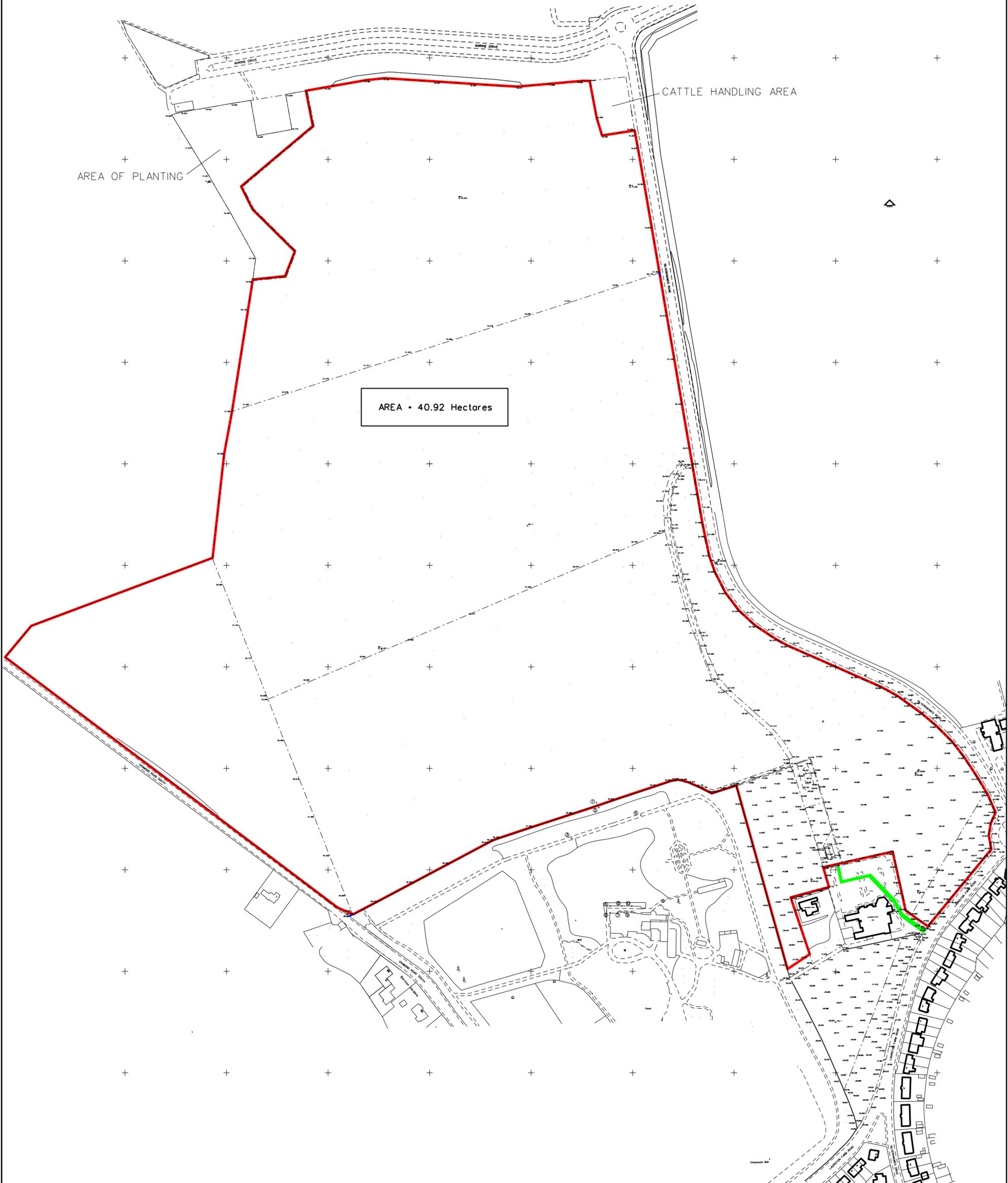
- 7.1 Ward members have been made aware of the recommendations of the report.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 Report to Housing and Economy Committee 22 March 2018 - [Granton Waterfront Regeneration Strategy](#)

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Location Plan



AREA - 40.92 Hectares

AREA OF PLANTING

CATTLE HANDLING AREA

• EDINBURGH •
 THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
 PROPERTY AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT
 RESOURCES

Agricultural Grazing Land
 Lauriston Farm Road
 AREA - 40.92Ha
 EDINBURGH

DATE	21/3/2019	SCALE	1:2500
SURVEYED BY	F McDonald/M Ballantyne		
DRAWN BY	Mark Ballantyne		
SCALE	1:2500 @ A2 SIZE		
NEG. NO.	NT 2076/A0/19 a		