**TAIN COMMON GOOD FUND –CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF BLARLIATH**

**GRAZINGS TO SITE FOR INSTALLATION OF SOLAR ARRAYS**

**REPRESENTATIONS AND RESPONSES**

**Representations**

The Council received 3 representations in response to the publication of the consultation document. 2 of the 3 simply stated their support for the proposal with the 3rd raising questions requiring the Council’s response (see below).

**Questions raised and the Council’s responses**

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| **QUESTIONS/ISSUES/CONCERNS** | **COUNCIL’S RESPONSE** |
| **What are your views on changing the use of this common good land?** | |
| What is the current use? | Grazings let on annual basis (364 days) |
| Could the land be used for industry? | That would depend on what is meant by industry however it is not envisaged that the land could be repurposed to cater for industry. The quality of the land, coupled with the limited access, make it potentially unattractive for industry. |
| If Tain expands, where would the sewage works expand to? | Scottish Water has been involved in discussion around the site development and is supportive. Any potential expansion is something that Scottish Water would need to discuss with Highland Council/Tain Common Good. The installation would be ground mounted therefore the arrays could be moved to accommodate but any proposal would need to go through a community engagement process and planning consultation similar to the Solar proposal. |
| What will the new rent be? | This is commercially confidential and will not be disclosed to the public. |
| How does it compare with the current rent? | This project has the potential to significantly increase the income for Tain Common Good comparative to current rates. |
| **What do you view as potential benefits?** | |
| Is there any information on the full carbon cost of the installation? | Project details have yet to be finalised. |
| Is there any information on the projected return on investment? | Project costs and specifications have yet to be finalised. ROI is commercially confidential and will not be disclosed to the public. |
| **Would you identify any issues or concerns?** | |
| Given Council’s current financial position, is an unquantified investment for an unquantified return in renewable technologies a good investment? (info quoted about 20 years to break even & position re Tain Academy biomass boiler not working) | This is a self-financing proposal and therefore does not compete with capital plans. Renewables technologies have drastically reduced in price making proposals much more financially viable than previously. |
| **Do you have any further comments?** | |
| Council has legacy loans nearing 10% interest – would paying these off be a better return on investment? | As part of the Treasury Management Strategy the Council regularly reviews its debt portfolio, looking at opportunities to reschedule its debt. At present the penalties payable for the early repayment of debt makes such action uneconomic. |
| Tight deadlines and Government caps limiting the FIT payments might result in money being spent without anticipated return being realised. | Feedback from the public consultation supports the Council acting more commercially and at times that requires the organisation to take calculated risks. The sequencing of project stages has been carefully designed to minimise exposure to potential losses. |