

FARMS ESTATE COMMITTEE

15 September 2016

Present:-

County Councillors:

Councillors C Chugg (Chairman), J Brook, J Berry, A Dewhirst, R Rowe and J Yabsley

Co-opted Members:

C Latham (Tenants' Representative)

Apologies:

Councillor R Julian and C Bellew (Devon Federation of Young Farmers)

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Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2016 be signed as a correct record.

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Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

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Revenue Monitoring 2016/17 (Month 4)

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/16/80) on the County Farms Estate Month 4 Revenue Monitoring Statement for 2016/17, noting the target surplus of £362,000 and detailing income and expenditure to date.

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Capital Monitoring 2016/17 (Month 4)

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/16/79) on the County Farms Estate Month 4 Capital Monitoring Statement for 2016/17, noting that:

- the approved Capital Programme for 2016/17 included schemes totalling £1,671,000, which included £271,000 and £900,000 respectively for existing and additional Nitrate Vulnerable Zone compliance schemes, with the remaining £500,000 relating to additional scheme priorities for Decent Homes standards, Energy Act and other associated infrastructure projects;
- scheme slippage of £771,000 together with land acquisition costs of £150,000 resulted in a capital programme of £2,592,000 for 2016/17;
- expenditure and commitments to date was £842,000 with a forecast year-end spend of £1,692,000.

Members were pleased to note the allocation of £500,000 for Decent Homes standards, Energy Act and other associated infrastructure projects.

* **24** **Devon Farm Business Awards 2015 and 2016**

The Committee received the Report of the Head of Business Strategy and Support (BSS/16/12) acknowledging the success of Estate tenants at the Devon Farm Business Awards 2015 and 2016.

Members noted that Awards had been made in eight categories and the winners and runners-up were as follows:

- Chris Carpenter of Fairfield Farm, Denbury – 2015 runner-up in the CAAV John Neason Diversification Awards;
- Marcus Warner of Lower Henland Farm, Kentisbeare – 2015 runner-up in the Best Young Farmer Category;
- Marcus Warner of Lower Henland Farm, Kentisbeare – 2016 winner of the CAAV John Neason Diversification Award;
- Gordon Davis of Westcott Farm, Burlescombe – 2016 winner of the Best Dairy Farmer Category and winner of the prestigious overall Farmer of the Year title;
- Louise Moorhouse of East Fingle Farm, Drewsteignton – 2016 runner-up in the Best Woman in Farming Category;
- Chris Creeper of Waterford Farm, Musbury – 2016 runner-up in the Best Young Farmer Category; and
- Martyn Mills of Middle Yeo Farm, Down St Mary – 2016 runner-up in the Best Young Farmer Category.

The Chairman undertook, on behalf of the Committee, to write to all Estate tenants nominated for the Devon Farm Business Awards in 2015 and 2016 in recognition of and congratulating them upon their outstanding achievements.

* **25** **Delegated Action/Urgent Matters**

The Committee noted the action taken by the Cabinet Member for Resources and Asset Management and/or the Head of Business Strategy and Support, in accordance with Part 3 of the County Council's Constitution, in approving the purchase of 85.45 acres of agricultural land at Lee, near Marwood, North Devon.

* **26** **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to, and which was likely to reveal the identity of, tenants and information relating to the financial or business affairs of tenants and the County Council and, in accordance with Section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, by virtue of the fact that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

* **27** **Holdings and Tenancies etc.**

(Items taken under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded, no representations having been received to such consideration under Regulation 5(5) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012)

(a) Monitoring of Tenants on an initial Farm Business Tenancy

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Business Strategy and Support (BSS/16/14) on the monitoring of tenants on an initial Farm Business Tenancy.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Brook, **SECONDED** by Councillor Yabsley and

RESOLVED

(i) that the tenants of Nutcombe Farm, Lower Farm, Waterford Farm and New Ford Farm be notified of the current and satisfactory level of competency attained to date;

(ii) that the tenant of New Gulliford Farm be advised that, due solely to the limited period of occupation between the delayed date of entry and the first monitoring visit, a further monitoring visit be carried out in September 2017;

(iii) that the tenant of Fairfield Farm, Denbury be offered a second but final seven year Farm Business Tenancy of the holding for a term commencing 25 March 2018 and terminating 25 March 2025, subject to terms being agreed;

(iv) that the tenant of Buckridge Farm, Denbury be offered a second but final seven year Farm Business Tenancy of the holding for a term commencing 25 March 2019 and terminating 25 March 2026, subject to terms being agreed;

(v) that the tenant of Mixing Barn Farm, Bovey Tracey be offered a second but final seven year Farm Business Tenancy of the holding for a term commencing 25 March 2018 and terminating 25 March 2025, subject to terms being agreed.

(b) Management and Restructuring issues

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Business Strategy and Support (BSS/16/13) on County Farms Estate Management and Restructuring issues.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Brook, **SECONDED** by Councillor Yabsley and

RESOLVED that, subject to the tenant surrendering his tenancy of Cotley Farm, Ottery St Mary and a prospective new tenant preparing a business plan supported by at least two years' worth of cashflows and budgets; and following interview, the interview panel being satisfied he would be a competent and suitable tenant, the prospective new tenant be granted a fixed term "progression" Farm Business Tenancy of Cotley Farm, Ottery St Mary commencing simultaneously with the current tenant's potential surrender, subject to terms being agreed.

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Next Meeting

Wednesday 30 November 2016 at 2.15pm.

<p>1. The Minutes of this Committee are published on the County Council's Website. 2. These Minutes should be read in association with any Reports or documents referred to therein, for a complete record. 3. Members of the Council have been granted a dispensation to allow them to speak and vote in any debate as a consequence of being a representative of the County Council on any County Council wholly owned, controlled or joint local authority company or Joint Venture Partnership unless the matter under consideration relates to any personal remuneration or involvement therein.</p>

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 11.07 am