

## FARMS ESTATE COMMITTEE

25 February 2019

Present:-

County Councillors

Councillors R Edgell (Chair), J Brook, A Dewhirst, T Inch, C Whitton and J Yabsley

Co-opted Members

Mrs L Warner (Tenants' representative)

Apologies

Councillor J Berry

\* 78

**Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings held on 3 December 2018 and 8 February 2019 be signed as a correct record.

\* 79

**Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no matter raised as a matter of urgency.

\* 80

**Announcements**

(a) The Chair welcomed Mrs Mayes who was attending the meeting in her capacity as a Co-opted Member of the Council's Standards Committee to observe and monitor compliance with the Council's ethical governance framework.

(b) The Devon Federation of Young Farmers Clubs' new representative on the Farms Estate Committee was Helen Bellew in place of Edward Quick.

\* 81

**Revenue Monitoring (Month 10) 2018/19**

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/19/29) on the County Farms Estate Revenue Monitoring (Month 10) 2018/19, noting the target surplus of £414,000 and providing a summary of the annual budget and detailing income and expenditure to date.

It was noted that NPS fees had increased as a result of a particularly busy year that included work with e.g. parish councils on wayleaves/leases; Airband (Broadband provider), six farm lettings, additional 1954 Act lettings and Common Law Tenancies, Farmwise Devon, Tenants' Training Academy, and on the repairs and maintenance programme.

\* 82

**Capital Monitoring (Month 10) 2018/19**

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/19/28) on the County Farms Estate Month 10 Capital Monitoring Statement for 2018/19, noting that the approved capital programme for 2018/19 included schemes totalling £600,000 and with scheme slippage of £1,068,360 and the unallocated savings of £236,595 resulted in a capital programme for 2018/19 of £1,904,955.

Forecasts anticipated spend of £1,552,587 at the end of 2018/19 with an unspent balance of £352,369 to be carried forward to 2019/20.

\* **83**      **Tenants' Training Academy (Minute \*25/11 December 2017)**

The Committee received the Report of the Head of Digital Transformation and Business Support (BSS/19/01) on a Tenants' Training Academy. At the Farms Estate Committee on 11 December 2017 at Minute \*25 it was resolved:

- (a) *that support for development by the Estates Land Agents, working with Alison Rickett, Managing Director of Fresh Start Land Enterprise Centre, of a Fresh Start Academy and an individual mentoring scheme, open to all County Farms Estate tenants be approved; and*
- (b) *that funding from the County Farms Estate revenue budget for sponsorship of the cost of running the Fresh Start Academy up to a cap of £5,000 per annum with the intent that attendance by County Farms Estate tenants should be free or substantially subsidised be approved.*

Ongoing discussions with Fresh Start Land Enterprise Centre did not materialise and contact was then made with the Princes Countryside Trust, who had agreed to contribute up to £5,000 worth of funding support for the initiative. Appendix 1 to the Report set out the inaugural programme of training events which included speakers from Promar, Kite, Savills and Bateman Hosegood, and solicitors from Michelmores. So far 26 tenants and/or their partners had signed up to the programme.

The Head of Digital Transformation and Business Supported reported that the first event had already taken place and had received excellent feedback. Members were welcome to attend the initial half hour opening *only* of any event.

The Committee commended the work of NPS on the Tenants' Training Academy which would benefit not just Tenants, but the whole County Farms Estate.

\* **84**      **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.

\* **85**      **Holdings and Tenancies etc.**

*(An item 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) The Head of Digital Transformation and Business Support updated the Committee on matters regarding East Hill Farm, Knowstone.

(b)      **Monitoring of Tenants on an Initial Farm Business Tenancy**

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Digital Transformation and Business Support (BSS/19/02) on the Monitoring of Tenants on an Initial Farm Business Tenancy.

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

**RESOLVED** that the sending of letters to the tenants of Higher Leigh Farm, Churchstow, Lower Chitterley Farm, Bickleigh and Middle Yeo Farm, Down St Mary recording the current and satisfactory level of competency attained to date be endorsed.

(c) **Request for Extension of Tenancy**

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Digital Transformation and Business Support (BSS/19/03) on a request for an extension of tenancy.

Members requested that legal advice be sought regarding the tenant's occupation.

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

**RESOLVED** that approval be given to a site visit to Higher Bradaford Farm, Virginstow before formally considering a request for an extension of tenancy by the Tenant of the holding.

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

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 3.10 pm

*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.*