

FARMS ESTATE COMMITTEE

7 December 2020

Present:

County Councillors

Councillors R Edgell (Chair), J Brook, J Berry, C Chugg, A Dewhirst and T Inch

Co-opted Members

L Warner (Tenants' representative)

Apologies

Councillors C Whitton

* 141 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2020 be signed as a correct record.

* 142 **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* 143 **Announcements**

The Chair was pleased to announce the recent acquisition of some additional farmland at Rose Ash in North Devon, adjacent to an existing County Council farm.

* 144 **Revenue Monitoring (Month 7) 2020/21**

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/20/104) on the County Farms Estate Revenue Monitoring (Month 7) 2020/21, noting the target surplus for 2020/21 of £464,000 and providing a summary of the annual budget and detailing income and expenditure to date.

* 145 **Capital Monitoring (Month 7) 2020/21**

The Committee received the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/20/106) on the County Farms Estate Capital Monitoring (Month 7) 2020/21, noting that the approved capital programme for 2020/21 included schemes totalling £600,000. There was an overspend of £30,888 in 2019/20 thus the balance of capital available to spend in 2020/21 amounted to £569,112.

The Committee noted that, to fully fund the decent homes improvements programme without delaying any works, it was proposed that £600,000 should be brought forward from the 2021/22 Estates Capital Programme to 2020/21. If approved, the revised 2020/21 budget would be £1,169,112.

* 146 **The County Farms Estate - Management and Restructuring issues**

The Committee considered the Report of the Head of Digital Transformation and Business Support (BSS/20/06) on County Farms Estate management and restructuring issues.

Land at Port Road, Dawlish

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

RESOLVED that a notice to quit be served bringing the current annual periodic tenancy to an end at 25 March 2022 and that the current tenant, Mr KP be offered first refusal of a further three year Farm Business Tenancy of the 1.13 acres or thereabouts of land at Duckaller Farm, Dawlish commencing 25 March 2022, subject to terms being agreed.

* 147 **The County Farms Estate - Agriculture Act 2020**

The Committee noted the Report of the Head of Digital Transformation and Business Support (BSS/20/07) on the Agriculture Act 2020, which had gained Royal Assent on 11 November 2020.

The Act set out the UK's approach to farming, replacing the Common Agricultural Policy that the UK had been part of since 1973, and provided the legal framework for the establishment of a new system of agricultural assistance for farmers and land managers.

Key points from the Report included:

- DEFRA's now published Agricultural Transition Plan;
- Replacement of the Basic Payment Scheme;
- the national pilot for the Environmental Land Management Scheme;
- New Entrant Support Scheme; and
- Agricultural Tenancy Reforms on retirement age.

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

RESOLVED

- (a) that further reports to future meetings to review the detailed proposals set out in the DEFRA Agricultural Transition Plan be welcomed;

- (b) that the Senior Land Agent be asked to write to all 1986 Act 'retirement' tenants bringing to their attention the change to the Case A retirement age; and
- (c) that the proposed new entrant support scheme be welcomed and that the Chair of this Committee write to DEFRA strongly encouraging them to focus support on Local Authority County Farms Estates Services whose purpose is to provide new entrant opportunities and have a long and successful track record of doing so.

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

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 2.42 pm