

**The County Farms Estate  
Management and Restructuring**

**Report of the Head of Digital Transformation and Business Support**

*Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.*

**Recommendation(s):**

That the Committee approves the recommendations as set out in the opening paragraphs of sections 1, 2 and 3 of this report.

**1.0 Lomans Farm, Broadhempston**

It is recommended that:

- (i) OS 2000 and Pt OS 2800 forming part Lomans Farm, Broadhempston and amounting to 0.88 acres or thereabouts be declared permanently surplus to the requirements of the Estate so that it can be sold on the open market.
- (ii) Lomans Farm, Broadhempston be advertised to let on the open market to a new entrant as a mixed livestock starter farm for a term of seven years commencing 25 March 2021 and expiring 25 March 2028, subject to terms being agreed.

**1.1 The Broadhempston Estate comprises:**

(a) Lomans Farm	–	26.77 hectares (66.15 acres)
Total	–	26.77 hectares (66.15 acres)

1.2 An area of land with a small redundant agricultural building on it and located on the periphery of the holding has been identified as an asset that might be capable of being sold on the open market at a premium (greater than existing/agricultural use value).

1.3 The barn is potentially suitable for conversion to a small residential dwelling subject to securing permitted development rights under Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

1.4 The barn is believed to be capable of conversion to a small dwelling.

1.5 The current tenant is prepared to sign a statutory declaration to confirm that the building was last in use as an agricultural building thus confirming its eligibility for Class Q.

1.6 Devon County Council officers have decided not to secure permitted development rights in advance of a sale on the basis that the cost to the Authority of securing the permitted development rights may outweigh the increase in the assets capital value.

1.7 At the County Farms Estate Committee meeting of 20 May 2019, members resolved under minute reference FE/93(a) Lomans Farm, Broadhempston:

*'that the tenant of Lomans Farm, Broadhempston be granted a further but final 12 month Farm Business Tenancy of the holding commencing 25 March 2020 and terminating 25 March 2021, subject to terms being agreed'.*

1.8 Terms have now been agreed for the extension of tenancy and it is anticipated the current tenant will vacate the holding on or before 25 March 2021. The holding is a well equipped starter holding that would afford a new entrant a good start to their farming career. It is therefore proposed the holding be advertised to let on the open market to a new entrant from 25 March 2021.

## **2.0 Lower Farm, High Bickington**

It is recommended that:

- (i) The current tenant of Lower Farm, High Bickington be invited to surrender from his lease the barn and part NG 7235 extending to 0.12 acres or thereabouts as soon as possible.
- (ii) The barn and part NG 7235 forming part Lower Farm, High Bickington and amounting to 0.12 acres or thereabouts be declared permanently surplus to the requirements of the Estate so that it can be sold on the open market.

2.1 The High Bickington Estate comprises:

(a)	Lower Farm	–	34.63 hectares (85.26 acres)
(b)	Part Little Bickington Farm -		0.11 hectares (0.27 acres)
	Total	–	34.74 hectares (85.53 acres)

2.2 An area of land with a small redundant agricultural building on it has been identified as an asset that might be capable of being sold on the open market at a premium (greater than existing/agricultural use value).

2.3 The barn is potentially suitable for conversion to a very small residential dwelling subject to securing permitted development rights under Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

2.4 The barn is believed to be capable of conversion to a very small dwelling.

2.5 The current tenant may be prepared to sign a statutory declaration to confirm that the building was last in use as an agricultural building thus confirming its eligibility for Class Q.

2.6 Devon County Council officers have decided not to secure permitted development rights in advance of a sale on the basis that the cost to the Authority of securing the permitted development rights may outweigh the increase in the assets capital value.

### 3.0 Cordwents Farm, Halberton

It is recommended that:

(i) Part NG 3881 forming part Cordwents Farm, Halberton and amounting to 0.14 acres or thereabouts be declared permanently surplus to the requirements of the Estate so that it can be sold, on a subject to contract and planning basis, on the open market.

3.1 The Halberton Estate comprises:

(a)	Cordwents Farm	–	34.63 hectares (85.26 acres)
(b)	The Mead Playing Field	-	0.11 hectares (0.27 acres)
(c)	Part NG 3881	-	0.05 hectares (0.14 acres)
	Total	–	34.79 hectares (85.67 acres)

3.2 At the County Farms Estate Committee meeting of 22 November 2012, members were informed of the officer decision taken under delegated powers to declare surplus part Cordwents Farm. Resolution FE/158 refers:

#### Action Taken Under Delegated Powers

*'The Committee noted the action taken by the Head of Business Strategy Support, in accordance with Part 3 of the County Council s Constitution, in declaring as permanently surplus to the operational requirements of the Estate Pt OS 3881 comprising land at Cordwents Farm, Halberton for disposal to Halberton Parish Council, subject to terms being agreed'.*

3.3 The transaction referred to in 3.2 was only completed in 2018 and the Parish Council are in the processes of fencing the boundary dividing the land sold and the land retained.

3.4 The land retained would appear, subject to planning, to represent a reasonable sized development plot, probably for a well designed single dwelling in keeping with the current traditional character of the Conservation Area and sympathetic to the adjacent listed properties.

3.5 Given the plot sits within a Conservation Area it is not possible to seek outline planning consent in advance of putting the asset on the market for sale.

3.6 It is therefore proposed that the land be declared permanently surplus to the requirements of the Estate and placed on the open market for sale. Inviting informal offers on a subject to contract and planning basis is likely to yield the best possible capital receipt for the County Council.

#### **4.0 Options/Alternatives**

4.1 Alternative options have been considered and discounted as they are believed to either be contrary to current Estate policy and/or not in the best financial interests of the Estate.

#### **5.0 Consultations/Representations/Technical Data**

5.1 The views and opinions of the Devon Federation of Young Farmers Clubs and the Estate Tenants Association will be presented by the two co-opted members to the committee.

5.2 No other parties have been consulted and no other representations for or against the proposal have been received

5.3 The technical data is believed to be true and accurate.

#### **6.0 Financial Considerations**

6.1 The Author is not aware of any financial issues arising from this report.

#### **7.0 Environmental Impact Considerations (including Climate Change)**

7.1 The Author is not aware of any environmental impact (including climate change) issues arising from this report.

#### **8.0 Equality Considerations**

8.1 The Author is not aware of any equality issues arising from this report.

#### **9.0 Legal Considerations**

9.1 The Author is not aware of any legal issues arising from this report.

#### **10.0 Risk Management Considerations**

10.1 The Author is not aware of any obvious risks to manage.

#### **11.0 Public Health Impact**

11.1 The Author is not aware of any public health impact.

#### **12.0 Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations**

12.1 The Author has prepared this report in accordance with the findings of the County Farms Estate Strategic Review (April 2010)

**Rob Parkhouse**  
**Head of Digital Transformation and Business Support**

Electoral Divisions: Ashburton & Buckfastleigh; Torrington Rural; Tiverton East

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers:

None

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