

**Report of the Cabinet Member for
Policy, Corporate and Asset Management**

I have been asked to report as follows for Full Council on 22 July 2021:

By Councillor Hannaford on:

Can the Leader please confirm that there are absolutely no plans to sell off our county farms estate. Could he or the relevant cabinet member also please outline the investment, development work and land acquisitions that have taken place during the last council term.

Furthermore could council please be updated about our Devon County Council commitment and vision for our county farms estate to ensure they have a secure , sustainable ,and profitable future.

Response

I am not sure how a rumour was circulated that the Farms estate was up for sale back in April / May of this year but to clarify the situation I have not suggested selling nor would I suggest it. One of my first decisions when we took over the Council in 2009 was to actually put a Cabinet Member responsible for the Farms Estate, and organised a review of the estate to look at the large list of backlog maintenance work, a lot of it critical. There was also need to do something urgently about Slurry handling on Dairy farms for the Environment Agency. We are now investing in the property to modernise a number of the farm houses.

The Farms estate is now in a much better condition than in 2009. We may have less farms, but they are more practical and viable farms for our tenants to work.

Please see table below for full details.

Year	Size (ac)	No of farms	Capital receipts (£)	Capital investment (£)	Land purchase (£)	Land purchase (ac)
2009/10	10,001 ac	82	£1,173,600	£63,252	£799,311	85 acres at Ide & 60 acres at Rockbear
2010/11	9,888 ac	80	£1,275,000	£588,746	0	0
2011/12	9,729 ac	75	£1,241,000	£1,121,004	0	0

2012/13	9,650 ac	75	£1,247,500	£1,489,777	0	0
2013/14	9,509 ac	71	£1,021,500	£552,215	0	0
2014/15	9,687 ac	68	£608,924	£377,000	£615,000	102 acres at Braunton
2015/16	9,619 ac	69	£3,843,000	£1,284,000	0	0
2016/17	9,590 ac	69	£1,476,115	£1,107,944	£150,000	26 acres at Marwood
2017/18	9,570 ac	68	£11,130,00 0	£778,599	0	0
2018/19	9,555 ac	65	£2,700,644	£1,365,740	0	0
2019/20	9,544 ac	65	£1,569,062	£1,189,225	0	0
2020/21	9,572 ac	65	£610,000	£954,093	£278,980	36 acres at Rose Ash
TOTAL S			£27,896,34 5	£10,871,59 5	£1,843,29 1	309 acres

In summary between financial years 2009/10 and 2020/21:

- the estate has reduced in size by 429 acres
- the estate has purchased 309 acres in 5 separate blocks
- the Council has invested £1,843,291 on the purchase of the replacement land (average of £5,965 / acre)
- the number of residential equipped holdings has reduced by 17
- the estate has generated £27,896,345 in capital receipts
- the Council has invested £10,871,595 in improved infrastructure on the estate – largely NVZ/SSAFO compliant slurry stores and farmhouse renovation and energy efficiency works

It is perhaps worth noting that we have been very successful buying land that is well located to the Estate. It is very rare that land sufficiently well located to existing holdings comes to the market, but we have pursued most, if not all suitable opportunities.

Councillor John Hart

Cabinet Member for Policy, Corporate and Asset Management