

Farms Audit update

To: Audit & Accounts Committee

Meeting Date: 23 March 2021

From: Head of Finance
Assistant Director Property

Electoral division(s): All

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable

Key decision: No

Purpose: To report back on progress with the Management Action Plan for strengthening policies and procedures of the County Farms Service, resulting from the 31 recommendations on these matters within the Farms Audit.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to note the progress of actions which arise from the Farms Audit.

Officer contacts:

Names: Tom Kelly/Tony Cooper

Post: Head of Finance/Assistant Director Property

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Member contact:

Name: Councillors Rogers

Post: Chairman, Audit & Accounts Committee

Email: Terry.Rogers@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

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1. Background

1.1 On 5th March 2021, a special meeting of the Audit & Accounts Committee met to consider the Farms Audit. In summary the following business was transacted:-

- The committee determined that the section of the Mazars' report on the County Farm Service process and procedures and the 31 recommendations in the relevant audit should be made public and considered first by the committee as these sections did not contain exempt information. The committee adjourned for those sections to be made public and the committee then debated in detail all of those recommendations and made comments, amendments and recommendations accordingly;
- The committee then resolved to consider the remainder of the reports in private concerning specific tenancy issues, code of conduct and disciplinary issues as this information was exempt and the committee considered, on the basis of the legal advice that they had received that these matters should not be considered in public;
- The committee agreed that a press release of the proceedings of the committee should be issued as soon as possible and that a further report be prepared for the consideration of this committee of matters which could be considered in the public domain. The press release can be found here: [Annex 1](#).

2. Management Action Plan

2.1 The thirty-one recommendations were made to strengthen policies and procedures of the County Farms Service and these management actions were reviewed by Mazars and these were considered and debated at length by the committee at its meeting on 5th March 2021.

2.2 An update on the actions being taken in relation to thirty one recommendations which were agreed is attached for Members' consideration

2.3 The other matters discussed at the committee meeting on 5th March will be considered further at another special meeting of the Committee on Friday 26th March.

3. Significant Implications

3.1 Resource Implications

3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

3.7 Public Health Implications

This report refers to the progress being made with the Farms Audit in the context of the relevant regulations and statutory framework. There are no other significant implications.

Implications

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?

Yes/No Name of Financial Officer: Tom Kelly

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?

Yes/No Name of Officer: Gus de Silva

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law?

Yes/No Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillian

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?

Not applicable

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?

Yes/No Name of Officer: Christine Birchall

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Not applicable

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health Not applicable

Source documents

Previous reports to this Committee: [Link to Audit & Accounts Committee page](#)