
Meeting: Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 22 October 2013
Subject: Developing a Farm Estate Strategy 2013-2023
Report of: Cllr Maurice Jones, Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Summary: The report proposes the process for developing the Farm Strategy

Advising Officer: Deb Clarke, Director of Improvement and Corporate Services
Contact Officer: Neil Earp, Interim Head of Asset Management
Public/Exempt: Public /Exempt appendix
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The emerging Farm Estate Strategy will set out the Council's view as to how it will manage and develop our farm estate over a 10 year period between 2013 and 2013. The scope of the Strategy will extend to all building and land assets owned or leased by the Council. It is proposed that the Strategy will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure alignment with corporate objectives and policies.

1. The draft Farm Strategy will seek to ensure that the key strategic objectives support the Council's vision and priorities as set out below:
 - Enhancing Central Bedfordshire – creating jobs, managing growth, protecting our countryside and enabling businesses to grow.
 - Improved educational attainment.
 - Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable.
 - Better infrastructure – improved roads, broadband reach and transport.
 - Great universal services – bins, leisure and libraries.
 - Value for money

Financial:

2. The following work arising from the recommendation will have cost implications:
 1. Procurement of the Policy Scoping Report - cost needs further investigation and quotes invited.
 2. Condition surveys - a budget estimate of £100,000 for 14/15 has been submitted.
 3. A field by field analysis and feasibility studies/option appraisals - a budget estimate of £50,000 for 14/15 has been submitted

The financial benefits of the Farm Strategy will be developed as we gather evidence and data and refine our objectives.

Legal:

3 Not applicable.

Risk Management:

4 Asset resources to manage the scope of work outlined in sections 4 & 5 of the report. Separate risks will be identified during the scoping of the strategy which may be applicable in the implementation of the plan.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. Not Applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6 No inequality or human rights issues are expected to arise from actioning the committee recommendation.

Public Health

7 The Farm Strategy could identify land that would be of benefit to the community for leisure related and recreational activities. Public access could also be facilitated or improved for walkers, riders and cyclists through the creation of formal access routes.

Community Safety:

8 Not Applicable.

Sustainability:

9 Potential opportunities for income generating uses for the Farm Estate from renewable energy, biomass crops, carbon trading.

Procurement:

10 The procurement of third party suppliers to support investigations and gathering of evidence.

RECOMMENDATION(S):**The Committee is asked to:-**

- 1. Approve the approach and process for developing the Farm Strategy and the next steps in gathering the evidence set out in Chapter 4.**

Appendices

Appendix A – Farms Estate Strategy