

# Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Wednesday 20 April 2022**

Time: **10 am**

Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH**

## Supplementary Agenda

### 11 County Farms – Updates on Actions Following Scrutiny

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**Report by Executive Director for Finance and Commercial Services**

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# Scrutiny Committee

Item No: 11

**Report Title: County Farms – Updates on Actions Following Scrutiny**

**Date of Meeting: 20 April 2022**

**Responsible Cabinet Member: Councillor Greg Peck Cabinet  
Member for Commercial Services  
and Asset Management**

**Responsible Director: Simon George  
Executive Director for Finance and  
Commercial Services**

## **Executive Summary**

This report provides a follow up to the comments made by Members at the September 2021 Scrutiny Committee.

## **Recommendations**

- 1. Members are asked to note the response from officers to the issues raised by the Scrutiny Committee in September 2021.**

## **1. Background and Purpose**

- 1.1 On 22 September 2021 Scrutiny Committee received an update report on the County Farms Estate.
- 1.2 The papers and minutes for this meeting can be found [here](#).
- 1.3 Officers took away the following actions from this meeting:
  - **The evidence base for the carbon footprint of the County wide Estate and wider biodiversity within the county would be made available to Cllrs outside of the meeting, when produced by the Environment Team.**
  - **Cllrs also asked for details about what should be done to achieve a net zero carbon emission target in relation to the County Farms Estate by 2030.**

## **2. Update on actions**

- 2.1 Councillors asked at the September 2021 meeting for details about what should be done to achieve a net zero carbon emission target in relation to the County

Farms Estate by 2030. There is no separate target for the farms estate, the Environmental Policy (approved 25 Nov 2019) states:

“Striving to meet this collective global challenge, we will work with our neighbours within the region, specifically Suffolk County Council and the Broads Authority, to collectively achieve ‘net zero’ carbon emissions on our estates by 2030, but within our wider areas, work towards ‘carbon neutrality’ also by 2030.”

The net zero carbon emissions requirement encompass the whole of the Council’s property portfolio and the Corporate Property Team are currently prioritising collecting data on the non-farms estate to establish a base line. Furthermore, an assessment report and retrofit improvement plans for each non county farms estate building will be developed over Spring – Autumn 2022 summer with the aim of decarbonising these property assets in a timely and cost-efficient manner.

- 2.2 As to what is happening “on the ground” in respect of the County farms estate is the emphasis on good management and husbandry of the land to grow crops and stock. Existing and new tenants are encouraged to join stewardship schemes so, for example, there are no spray margins next to water courses, encouraged to plant trees and hedges, improving access to the countryside and encouraging mixed farming.
- 2.3 The County Farms team are working with tenants to increase tree and hedge planting. Some tenants are adopting reduced ploughing as part of the usual rotation and being very careful and focused with all inputs (spray and fertilizer) not the least because they are so very expensive.
- 2.4 The Farm Business Tenancy agreement has been updated for new entrants to include a clause to prohibit carbon trading.
- 2.5 Scrutiny Committee also asked about Care Farms. The County Farms team has identified an opportunity on the West Walton Estate at Ingleborough Farm (located 11 miles west of King’s Lynn) as part of this year’s reletting round. Applications are currently in the process of being examined with the expectation of a possible new Care Farm starting in October 2022.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 No financial implications arising from this update report.

### **4. Resource Implications**

- 4.1 Staff: nil
- 4.2 Property: nil
- 4.3 IT: nil

## 5. Other Implications

- 5.1 **Legal Implications:** No legal implications arising from this update on actions report.
- 5.2 **Human Rights Implications:** No human rights implications arising from this update on actions report.
- 5.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):** No specific EqIA has been undertaken in respect of this update report.
- 5.4 **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):** No data protection impact implications arising from this update on actions report.
- 5.5 **Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):** No health and safety implications arising from this update on actions report.

## 6. Risk Implications / Assessment

- 6.1 No risk implications arising from this update on actions report.

## 7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the response from officers to issues raised by the Scrutiny Committee in September 2021.

## 8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Report to Scrutiny Committee 22 September 2021, [LINK to agenda papers](#) item 8, page 11.

### Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with:

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