

Equality Impact Assessment



Hampshire
County Council

County Farms Policy

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Department: Culture, Communities and Business
Services

Date of
assessment: 09/03/2021

Description of current service/policy

The County Farms Policy sets out priorities and provides the framework for the management of the County Farms Service which provides opportunities for individuals to establish and grow farm businesses on County Council owned land through farm tenancy agreements.

Geographical impact: All
Hampshire

Description of proposed change

A policy review has been undertaken and a new Policy developed that reflects changes in the wider agricultural sector and aligns with the County Council's strategic priorities. The new Policy retains the existing priority to enable and support new entrants to farming and provide progression opportunities to existing tenants. The Policy incorporates increased emphasis on securing high quality environmental and social outcomes from the County Farms Estate which will benefit local communities across Hampshire.

Impacts of the proposed change

This impact assessment covers Service users

Engagement and consultation

Has engagement or consultation been carried out? Yes

A Member Advisory Group was created to support the Policy review. Feedback from this group has informed the development of the new Policy and identified the potential inequalities in the agricultural sector and the need for an open and inclusive approach to the recruitment of new tenants to encourage increased diversity. Consultation has also taken place with existing County Farms tenants

Statutory considerations	Impact	Mitigation
<p>Age: Positive</p>	<p>The Policy review recognised that the average age of farmers in the UK is increasing - government data highlighted that in 2016 the median age for holders in the UK was 60 years old - and that there are many challenges facing younger new entrants to the sector. The Policy reinforces the role of the County Farms service to provide opportunities for new entrants to farming, supporting those who are younger in age, as well as continuing to provide progression opportunities for existing tenants to further develop their farm businesses. The Policy also has an increased focus on environmental and social outcomes from the County Farms estate benefitting all age groups through improvements in the natural environment, management of rights of way and the encouragement of farm diversification, such as farm shops, that offer employment and services to the local community.</p>	
<p>Disability: Neutral</p>		
<p>Sexual orientation: Neutral</p>		

<p>Race: Positive</p>	<p>Research drawing on data from the 2015 Labour Force Survey identified farming as one of the least ethnically diverse occupations in the UK. The County Farms Policy review recognised the challenges for new entrants to the sector. The new Policy reflects an open and inclusive approach to the recruitment of new tenants and this is recognised as the first step in enabling opportunity and increasing diversity across the County Farms Estate. Further work will be undertaken as the Policy is implemented to identify and remove barriers to diversity in Hampshire's County Farms service.</p>	
<p>Religion and belief: Neutral</p>		
<p>Gender reassignment: Neutral</p>		
<p>Gender: Positive</p>	<p>The Policy review recognised the potential for gender inequality in farming and the importance of removing barriers to diversity across the sector. ONS statistics indicate that 17% of UK farmers are female but there was only one female tenant on Hampshire's County Farms Estate at the time of the Policy review. The new Policy reflects an open and inclusive approach to the recruitment of new tenants and this is recognised as the first step in enabling opportunity and increasing diversity across the County Farms Estate. Further work will be undertaken as the Policy is implemented to identify ad remove barriers to diversity in Hampshire's County Farms service.</p>	

Marriage and civil partnership: Neutral		
Pregnancy and maternity: Neutral		
Other policy considerations	Impact	Mitigation
Poverty: Neutral		

<p>Rurality: Positive</p>	<p>The Policy review recognised that there are benefits that the farm businesses and management of County Farms land can offer to rural communities and this is reflected in the new Policy. This includes effective management of rights of way, improving the natural environment and, through diversification, providing opportunities for local sale of farm produce, reducing the reliance on private and public transport. This latter benefit has been evident during the Covid-19 pandemic when farm shops, milk vending machines and food box delivery schemes have supported local communities during periods of national lockdown and associated travel restrictions.</p>	
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Neutrality statement (if all considerations have a neutral impact)

Any other information

The new County Farms Policy is subject to approval by the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage, Countryside and Rural Affairs at his decision day on 10th March 2021 and will be implemented once approved.