

Rural Development Sub-committee

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Rural Development Sub-committee Inquiry into Local Authority Farms in Wales: Terms of Reference""

Purpose

1. This paper sets out the terms of reference for the Sub-committee's scrutiny inquiry into local authority farms in Wales, as agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 19 May 2010.

Background

2. At its meeting on 1 October 2009, the Committee considered a scoping paper on options for future inquiries and agreed to consider local authority farms in Wales as a topic for a scrutiny inquiry.

An inquiry on the topic was included in the Sub-committee's Work Programme for 2010 published on 30 November.

3. The following are the terms of reference for the inquiry:

To assess the current provision of local authority farms in Wales and how the network should be developed in future;

To make recommendations to the Welsh Assembly Government and any other appropriate bodies.

The inquiry will consider:

The statistical information available relating to local authority farms in Wales and the current circumstances of the network;

The future contribution of the local authority farm network in Wales to providing a key access point for new entrants to farming and promoting progression of existing tenants within the public and private sectors;

How tenancy legislation can best provide a balance between the flexibility needed by new entrants and the long-term security needed for the best management of rural land;

How to encourage long-term investment and diversification of tenanted farms whilst maintaining the size of the local authority farms estate;

Whether a co-ordinated approach to the disposal and/or retention of local authority farms is needed;

Whether local authorities and the Welsh Assembly Government could take any further action to help maintain and develop the local authority farm network in the future, both in terms of improving the estates themselves and contributing to wider community and environmental goals.