

Lesley Griffiths MS

Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd

23 January 2024

Committee inquiry: Farming Connect

Dear Lesley

Last year the Committee agreed that its spring work programme would include looking at Farming Connect and how it will support the implementation of the Sustainable Farming Scheme. Having pursued invitations to Farming Connect officials to give oral evidence, it appears that the tender process for the new contract, and ongoing consultation on the SFS, are factors in the timing of this work.

The Committee has decided to go ahead with seeking views on Farming Connect from a range of farming and environmental stakeholders at its meeting on 22 February, and will initially seek written evidence from those delivering the current contract, with oral evidence taken from the new contract holder(s) at a later date. To inform our work it would be very helpful if you could confirm the following:

- The expected timings of the tender process (to help the Committee know how best to feed views into the process of agreeing terms of reference and remit for those delivering the new contract);
- when the new contractor/s will be in post (to help the Committee know when it might ask them to come in to discuss their plans);
- plans for transition between the current and future Farming Connect contracts to ensure a smooth transition and handover;



- details of the Welsh Government's plans for the new contract – e.g. which programmes/services will be prioritised and what resource is available; and
- how the Welsh Government expects Farming Connect to help implement the broad elements of the proposed SFS (while acknowledging the SFS is still out to consultation).

I would be grateful for the Committee to receive a response in time to inform the sessions planned with stakeholders, i.e. by close of play on Monday 5 February.

Kind regards,



Paul Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English