

Herefordshire Council Revised Smallholdings Policy 2015 (Updated January 2016)



VISION

"To support the efficient, integrated delivery of public services across the county by providing modern, fit for purpose buildings, shared by Public Agencies"

Revised Smallholdings Policy 2015

- 1 The council is clear that its policy is to conduct a structured disposal of its entire smallholdings estate, having established that the retention of a rural estate is no longer a corporate priority.
- 2 The disposal of the estate will involve, on a case by case basis, the consideration of all options and the commissioning of expert independent professional advice to ensure that best value is obtained for the tax payer.
- 3 Any disposal will be conducted in line with the requirements of the constitution and with full openness and transparency with a view to open market value being realised in all cases.
- 4 Land and/or buildings which are identified as having development potential should be identified as separate from protected agricultural use and promoted for sale to maximise commercial/development value.
- 5 Tenants with life or retirement tenancies will be offered a 'without prejudice' and without obligation opportunity to discuss at a time convenient to them options for early termination of their tenancy where this would assist the delivery of their development of the estate. The council will consider each on a case by case basis.
- 6 In disposing of any element of the smallholding estate the council will have regard to the welfare and needs of current tenants who are affected by the sale, ensuring that their respective rights are protected to the end of their contractual term.
- 7 As part of the disposal process, the council will consider potential redevelopment of surplus farm houses and farm buildings, such as barns. This may involve the seeking of planning consents where it is felt that this will enhance the value of surplus property to be sold. Where appropriate any disposal of surplus buildings could include a small amount of land if this could generate an enhanced capital receipt.
- 8 Any disposal of areas of land identified as containing mineral deposits of commercial value should be subject to the council retaining mineral rights.
- 9 Any maintenance undertaken prior to disposal shall reflect unavoidable compliance obligations. This expenditure should be based on an assessment of any risk involved and the potential to contribute to an enhanced capital receipt at disposal.
- 10 Any capital investment undertaken prior to the disposal should be evaluated on its ability to protect and enhance the capital value of the asset and be subject to the approval of an appropriate business case.
- 11 A master disposal plan will be developed which will be subject to executive approval. It will be updated on a regular basis and be monitored as part of the council's performance management framework.